HARYANA WOMEN ON THE MOVE

(Part II)

Janak Duggal

Women's Studies Unit
National Council of Educational Research and Training
Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016
1990

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Foreword

National Perspective plan 1988 perceives women as an important force and a vital agent of change in the nation building process. They form almost fifty percent of the population component of our country. But majority of these women have been lagging behind men for decades together. Hence for building a strong social structure it is necessary that they should be developed into a powerful human resource. As a step to realise this end a scheme of Mahila Mandals has been initiated by various state governments to provide opportunities to village women to unfold their latent potentialities.

In order to have a general view of the movement a pilot study of Mahila Mandals in district Rohtak was taken up by Smt. Janak Duggal during the year 1988-89. The investigator has vivdly brought to light the strong and weak aspects of the movement. I have great appreciation for her painstaking efforts in visiting the interior villages of district Rohtak and the participatory approach adopted by her in exploring the genuine problems and unexploited potential of the rural women.

It is hoped that the report will be of great help to the planners, administrators and agencies

working at the state and voluntary levels in understanding the problems, strengths and weaknesses of the women in the far flung villages. It is also felt that the study will be of practical use to them in planning and implementing the programmes for empowering women on the basis of their requirements and felt needs.

The study has been reported in the two parts. The first part contains the methodology of conducting the study, its general findings and suggestions. The second part consists of the instruments used in conducting the study, detailed reports of thirtynine Mahila Mandals and other relevant information. The present volume is the second part of the report.

Any suggestions which may acclerate the process of empowerment of rural women and mobilise the Mahila Mandal members in achieving the set educational targets expeditiously will be welcome.

(USHA NAYAR)
Head
Women's Studies Unit
NCERT, New Delhi.

Acknowledgements

I am highly grateful to:

- Prof Usha Nayar, Head, Women's Study Unit for her guidance in the conduction of the study from its inception to the final stage. But for her deep involvement it would not have been possible to complete this venture at the grass root level.
- Prof Sarojini Bisaria for sharing the views whenever she was approached.
- District and Block administration, Rohtak for Provding physical facilities to conduct the study.
- Ms Kiran Angra, Lecturer, Hindu College, Sonepat for extending co-operation in trying out the data collection tools and conducting case studies of a few Mahila Mandals on trial basis during her spare time.
- Ms Santosh Seth, Lady Circle Supervisor, Rohtak
  Ms Vidyotma, Mukheya Seveka, Kalanaur Block
  Ms P.D. Bhatnagar, Divisional Chulha Supervisor
  for accompanying the investigator to the far off villages at the time of conducting the case studies.
- Sh. Raghubir Singh for his perseverance in making the old records available to the investigator.

Janak Duggal

M.M.	Means	Mahila Mandal
L.C.S.	Means	Lady Circle Supervisor
M.S.	Means	Mukheya Seveka
G.S.	Means	Gram Seveka
B.D.O.	Means	Block Development Officer
D.D.P.O.	Means	District Development and Panchayat Officer
NFEC	Means	Non Formal Education Centre

I List of the Mahila Mandals

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(Garhi Balbh)

(Block Kalanaur, District Rohtak)

Introduction:

The Mahila Mandal (M.M.) was started at a small village Garhi Balbh on ad hoc basis at the end of the year 1981 but it got registration on 1.10.87 (Registration No. 2355). An Aganwari is also being r here. The village is about 10 kilometer from Kalanau It is a Jat dominated village. Most of its men folk had been in army or police and the land which belongs to them has been mostly awarded in recognition of the distinguished services in different wars during British regime. In local language these gifts are called 'Murabas'. Besides Jats there are a few house which belong to scheduled castes and backward classes Possibly they would have come there long back and allowed by Jat families to settle there to help their women folk in agricultural pursuits during their long absence from home for duty in the army.

2. Composition of Mahila Mandal:

The Mahila Mandal (M.M.) has 20 members at present. Out of these 16 are Jat, 1 Brahmin, 2 Scheduled Caste and 3 Backward class. Since its inception Ms. Kishni Devi is the M.M. Pradhan. She is a sturdy Jat women of about 50 years of age. Her father-in-law was a 'Foji' (in the army) and got the present agricultural land in 'Muraba'. Her husband died very young. The lady feels proud that she brought up her 4 daughters and a son by herself. The circumstances have developed confidence and positive self image in the women and have turned her a bold person who finds no difficulty in staying all alone in a big house in the village alongwith her cattle when the daughters are married and the son is away to Karnal for his job in Police.

In the executive of the M.M. there are 7 other elected women to share responsibility with Ms. Kishni Devi. One each of them is Nai and Lohar. The other 5 are Jat. An impression was gathered that Jats do consider themselves superior to other castes and the other caste women have been included in the M.M. executive on the instance

of the then Mukheya Seveka. But this impression cannot be given a currency as it is based on only one day's visit to the village. Perhaps more visits are required to reach an objective conclusion.

3. Analysis of the Activities of the Mahila Mandal:

3.1 Analysis of the record from 29.12.81 to 6.12.88 reveals that 36 meetings of the M.M. as detailed below have been convened during this period.

Year	Number of Meetings
1981	1
1982	12
1983	6
1984	5
1985	3
1986	1
1987	7
1988	1
Total	36

3.2 The above mentioned record indicates that the members have not been meeting frequently. Possible explanatio for this may be that the women have very little spare time at their disposal after pursuing agricultural pursuits to meet and discuss their common problems. Secondly they do not see much utility of these meeting in their life. Thirdly due to scarcity of staff at the block level, it had not been possible for Mukheya Seveka or Gram Seveka to visit this village often to mobilise women for conducting meetings for mutual enhancement of knowledge and sharing their problems.

3.3 During the 36 meetings the discussions revolved around keeping utensils and homes clean; maintenance of kitch garden; smokeless choolahas; development of healthy habits among children e.g. they should take bath daily, regularly cut their nails and clean their teeth etc; Kirtan; need for opening small saving accounts; construction of bathrooms in the homes; nutritious die preparation of 'Kofte', 'Pati' of ground-nuts and other eatables; family planning programme; proper storage of grains; use of dustbins; knitting of woollen garments; washing and

care of clothes; immunisation of children; election of office bearers; dowry and its evils; education of girls; income generating projects; and growing fruit trees in the courtyard of the homes.

4. Some Observations and Suggestions:

4.1 It was surprising to note that during the tenure of M.M. for the last eight years only once (on 20.5.86) the question of educating girls and need for providing equal opportunities to them alongwith boys was discussed. Neither the Mukheya Seveka nor the M.M. Pradhan ever felt the necessity of discussing this important issue in their meetings.

This M.M. discussed this aspect at least once whereas there are majority of M.M. which have not felt the necessity of even touching this matter in a running reference. This is an important point, which need to be included in the job chart of Mukheya Sevekas and Gram Sevekas. The matter may also be pursued with the State Training Centre at Nilokheri to include this aspect in the Training Programme meant for M.M. office

bearers, the Mukheya Sevekas, the Gram Sevekas and the craft teachers concerned with the development programme in the state.

4.2 Ms. Kishni Devi, the M.M. Pradhan appears a very possessive mother. Her son got married about 5-6 years back but the daughter-in-law is not staying at her matrimonial home. She wants to go with her husband to the place of his posting and does not want to stay at the village with her mother-in-law. But Ms. Kishni is an example of a shrewd mother-in-law. She has an apprehension that once the 'Bahu' goes with him, the son will stop bothering for her and may not even send money regularly. So she has started putting one or the other blame on the daughter-in-law and does not want to straighten the matter. She believes that a girl's father is always inferior to the boy's parents, so the father of the 'Bahu' should bring her and apologise to Ms. Kishni. It seems that Kishni Devi is not interested that her son and daughter-in-law should reconcile and lead a normal life.

4.3 One also gathers from the discussions with other M.M. members that the girl's father is a simple person and her paternal uncle is very cunning. The uncle possibly thinks that the girl has been married and has come back to her paternal home herself so there is no social stigma on them. Now they have a free labourer to work at the agricultural fields, look after the cattle and household chores. Moreover while living separately from her husband she is getting Rs.250/- per month regularly from her husband's Salary as maintenance allowance. So why the girl should be sent back to the village to live with the mother-in-law.

4.4 One is pained to know about the fate of the innocent girls who are emotionally, physically and economically exploited at the matrimonial as well as paternal homes for elder's vested interests. The illiterate girls believe them and are not that much socially exposed to gauge their underlying intentions. Such incidences call for an urgent need to equip girls by formal or non-formal educative processes to understand and face such situations and watch their

interests themselves. They need proper exposure and help to develop communication skill to forcefully put up their point of view in the family and community at large. They should be made aware of their legal rights and status in paternal as well as matrimonial homes and embolden to assert the same wherever their is a need for t same.

4.5 Taking a clue from such instances Mukheya Seveka and Gram Seveka should strongly advocate the literacy compaign for girls in the village. Members of M.M. ~~may be made to understand the importance of education~~ for girls. The members may also be motivated to actively co-operate in enrolment and retention of girls in the school and also to work as watch dogs for the existing educational institutions in the village and ensure that the teachers are regular, sincere and attentive in performing their duties towards the children put under their care.

.6 The Mahila Mandal members may also be advised to put moral pressure on Ms. Kishni Devi to bring back her

daughter-in-law with dignity and condemn her thinking of looking at girls inferior to boys. It is desireable that Mukheya Seveka or Gram Seveka should intervene and mobilise M.M. members to bycott Ms. Kishni socially for such act. They should not think and say "Why should we make Kishni our enemy". They should learn to view the problem of all women whether daughter, daughter-in-law neighbourer or even an unknown person as their own and put in sincere efforts to solve the same collectively. There is a need to uplift rural women above caste, creed or the orbit of relationship. Efforts are to be made to thread them in a chain where they should feel "Cause of any women is a common cause for all women in the village."

4.7 There is another case of a member of the M.M. Her husband does not work at all. He always poses that he is seriously ill and is not going to live longer. Sometimes he will lie down on the floor and will say that he is a guest of a few minutes. In this way the poor wome was always in great tension. One day the Mukheya Seveka spent a good deal of time with her and made her understanc

that this is only drama. If she will continue to bother that way then she will surely die one day while the man will remain hale and hearty and totally unharmed because he is alright and there is nothing wrong with him. If she dies due to this emotional struggle then he will remarry and it is only the children who will suffer in this process. The women has now understood the reality and has adopted a reasonable attitude towards the man. She is now looking after six cattle and the land and rearing up the children. The man has also improved his behaviour to a great extent. It is creditable that Mukheya Seveka has helped a women to lead a tension free life. If all the members of the M.M. and state supervisory staff take keen interest in improving the quality of life of the rural women then many such problems can be solved and the women can be enabled to lead a better life pattern.

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KALANGA

(Block Kalanaur, District Rohtak)

1. Introduction:

Kalanga is about 19 kilometer from Kalanaur. Majority of its population belongs to Rajput community. Most of the Rajput women still believe in old traditions and prefer to remain within the four walls of their homes. In the year 1985 a Mahila Mandal (M.M.) was started on ad hoc basis in this village. It was registered in the year 1986 (Registration No.724). Two Aganwaries for the children between the age-group 3-6 years are also being run in this village. The Mahila Mandal received a discretionary grant of Rs.5000 about 3 years back, through the then Health Minister of Haryana for conducting welfare activities for the village.

2. Composition:

Since the inception of the M.M. Ms. Ompati had been the M.M. Pradhan. She is a Rajput middle aged religious minded women. At present there are 25 members. Out of these 14 are Rajput, 5 Brahmin, 4 Scheduled Caste and

2 Backward class. There are 8 office bearers. One each is Brahmin and Scheduled Caste and the remaining 6 are Rajput. Almost all the members are the follower of Radhaswami sect and do not believe in high or low caste. All consider themselves as equal.

3. Activities:

3.1 An analysis of the record of the activities from 6.3.85 to-date indicates that in the year 1985 the number of meetings conducted by the M.M. was 23. Fifteen meetings were convened during 1986. Only 7 meetings were held in 1987 and one in the year 1988.

3.2 The items discussed during these meetings were family planning; small saving schemes; health care of aged and children; use of dustbins; construction of bathrooms in the homes; nutritious diet; smokeless chullahas; necessity of keeping kitchen clean; preparation of food items like Sharbat, Suzi Ki Kheer, Dal Ki Vari, Rice Pullow, Upma, Khichri etc; cleanliness of homes and lanes; meed for Mahila Mandal Bhavan, and provision of matching grant by the government for growing plants; immunisation of children

balanced diet; immunisation of children; balanced diet; growing vegetables for self consumption; proper storage of grains; construction of 'Pucca' floor for cleaning utensils; fixation of wooden shelf for keeping utensils; utility of solar cooker; income generating projects e.g. soap making, sewing and embroidery, making toys etc; preservation of vegetables by drying in the Sun, excursions; election of office bearers; and 'Kirtan'. The 'Satsang' is held on 5th of every month. Objectively speaking 'Satsang' is the main activity of this M.M.

4. <u>Highlights of the Mahila Mandal and a Few Suggestions to Strengthen it:</u>

4.1 Faith in the common religion is the binding force for the members of the M.M. The monthly Satsang helds in the house of the M.M. Pradhan. Her daughter named Kela conducts it. Previously Pradhan's husband had been conducting the same. Now his health does not allow and the daughter Kela is looking after it.

4.2 Kela, a young Rajput girl is a living example of the exploitation of women in the Rajput Community. She has a history of her own. Summarily she is the eldest girl among the four daughters and two sons in the family. She was married to a Rajput boy when he was quite young. In her matrimonial home she did not have mother-in-law. She had died and the father-in-law arranged the marriage of the son, so that a young girl may come and manage the house. It is stated that the father-in-law had evil designs and tried to exploit the young bride sexually. The young girl got frightened, depressed and shocked. She came back to her parents and refused to go back to her in-laws.

4.2.1 In the parental home the father was not keeping good health and was finding difficulty in conducting and running the 'Satsang' and 'Kirtan' activities in the village. It appears that instead of trying to set the affairs straight in her matrimonialhome he also instigated the immatured girl to take 'Sanyas' and keep herself absorbed in 'Guru Bhajan'.

4.2.2 Due to the pressure of the community the girl was sent to her in-laws once or twice but in the circumstaces the immature mind of the girl developed such an aversion that she refused to lead a married life and decided to lead the life of a saint at her parents' home. The Community Panchayat has sorted out the conflict now and the boy has recently remarried and as such the chapter is closed for Kela for ever.

4.2.3 Now the parents are keen that in some way or the other grant may be managed from the state or funds may be collected by Satsangs so that a 'Satsang Bhavan' could be constructed where Kela may live and continue with the religious activities.

4.2.4 These are the incidents where M.M. can play vital role in saving girls from emotional and economic exploitations. Mukheya Sevekas (M.S.) and Gram Sevekas (G.S.) can intervene to solve such family riddles. But for all this there is a need to develop scientific attitude in M.S. and G.S. They need to be equipped through orientation programmes to face such type of situations in the villages.

4.3 There are two Rajput groups in the village. One to which Ms. Ompati the present M.M. Pradhan belongs and another which is keen to change her and make another women belonging to their group the M.M. Pradhan. The second group has levied charges that the present Pradhan collects money in the name of M.M. and uses it for her personal ends. In protest the present Pradhan has submitted her resignation but the same has been kept pending by the M.S. till the new elections are held to elect the Pradhan again. In the circumstances the other activities of the M.M. are standstill except the monthly Satsang convened by Kela.

4.3.1 It appears that once some funds are allocated for the M.M. and some authority is given to M.M. Pradhan to supervise the working of Aganwaries, Safai Karamcharies etc. as is being initiated by the state government, it will become a coveted post. It will also mobilise village women to take more interest in the formation and running of Mahila Mandals.

4.4 Decrease in the number of meetings in the subsequent years indicates that no one likes to hear about the same

points repeatedly. People get bore. It is therefore necessary that M.S. and G.S. should keep themselves abrest with the new and latest information about the thing which may interest rural women. Timings and dates of the visits should be known to the members of M.M. and the information provided to them should be such that they may keenly wait for M.S. and G.S. They should look towards them to get their advise to solve their family problems. Mukheya Seveka and the Gram Seveka also need to be equipped to come up to their expectations.

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Shimli

(Block Kalanaur, District Rohtak)

1. Introduction:

Shimli is a village in Kalanaur block in district Rohtak of Haryana. It is situated on Rohtak, Jhajjar road. Contrary to the rules of the scheme this village has two registered Mahila Mandals whereas there is only one Panchayat. It is said that by mistake the name of the second Mahila Mandal was recommended by the then Mukheya Seveka (M.S.) for registration and as such it got registered. Now the case has been referred to the Head office for taking decision whether to merge the two M.Ms. or they may be allowed to keep their separate identities.

The M.Ms. visited earlier in the block were of a longer standing. It was therefore felt that a M.M. which is in its infancy may also be visited to observe how its activities take shape when it is at the stage of growing and establishing itself. Hence a situational analysis of the newly registered M.M. in this village was made instead of the old one.

2. How the Mahila Mandal started

Ms. Hoshiari Devi who is the M.M. Pradhan was once a 'Panch' in the village Panchayat. When she was not nominated to the next village Panchayat she did her best to form a separate M.M. and some how or the other got it registered too on 1.10.87. (Its registration number is 2357).

It appears that once a person has a taste of social recognition or power, may be notional, one makes spontaneous efforts to sustain it. The case of Ms. Hoshiari Devi can be cited as an example to support this point.

Significant Contributions of the Initiator:

The M.M. Pradhan, a Jat by caste is a middle aged social and hospitable women with a zeal to do something to get an appreciation from the administration and support from the members. Her main contributions in this direction are pointed out in the following paragraphs.

3.1 A craft centre is being run in the M.M. Pradhan's house. She is not charging any rent for that. Above all she

herself takes care that girls coming there are utilising their time properly and even craft teacher is also properly looked after. An outsider could easily judge that the craft teacher is very familiar with her household and is treated like a daughter in the family.

3.2 There is a shortage of drinking water in the village. Pradhan at her own cost has got installed a hand pump and luckily the water coming out of it is also fit for drinking. She has allowed every one irrespective of the membership of this Mahila Mandal to take water from it at any time of the day. In contrast to it the other Jats do not allow the persons from the other or lower castes to take water from their pumps. They even go to the extent of removing handles of their pumps when they have taken out water for their consumption. It was quite touching to note that some of them are so inhuman that they will remove the handle even if per chance an outsider is taking water from their pump and the pitcher is half filled. In this context the behaviour of the Pradhan is very much valued by the members of the

M.M. and they have all praise for her. They also desire that the identity of this M.M. may be maintained and Ms. Hoshiari Devi should continue as Pradhan.

3.3 The M.M. has 25 members at present. Out of these 17 are Jats, 3 Scheduled Castes and 5 belong to Backward class. In this way it is a harmonious mix of castes. In their behaviour no Jat members seems to differentiate with other castes. This is an achievement of the Pradhan. Even some of the office bearers belong to Scheduled and Backward classes. Further details of the office bearers are as follows:

S.No.	Name	Position	Caste	Remarks
1.	Ms. Ramo Devi	Up-Pradhan	Khati	Backward class
2.	Ms. Murti	Secretary	Dhanak	Scheduled Caste
3.	Ms. Ganga Devi	Treasurer	Chamar	- Do -
4.	Ms. Prem Devi	Member	Jat	
5.	Ms. Dharmo	Member	Jat	
6.	Ms. Prem Kaur	Member	Jat	
7.	Ms. Shakuntala	Member	Dhanak	Scheduled Caste

4. Working Details:

4.1 Since its inception in August 1987 to-date (October 1988)

the M.M. had 22 meetings as per details given below:

Number of Meeting held of the Mahila Mandal

M.M.	Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Shimli	1987	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	1	1	6
	1988	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	3	-	-	16
														22

Duration of the meetings differ on the basis of the time available with the members. Usually the duration ranges between half an hour to one and a half hours.

4.2 An analysis of the record of the M.M. meetings was made to find out the main discussion points during these meetings. The points discussed during the 22 meetings mentioned in 4.1 alongwith the frequency of each point referred to during these meetings are stated below. The frequency of each item is indicated in the parenthesis. Cleanliness of clothes, home (specially necessity of kitchen and bath place with concrete floorings, proper arrangement of utencils, boxes etc.), surroundings and importance of ventilators in the homes (14); Use of dustbins and necessity of covering the grabage from health point of view (4); Family planning techniques and required co-operation of Mahila Mandal members to motivate

village women for tubectomy etc. (9); Family Welfare programmes which cover immunisation, need for nutritious diet for children, pregnent and lectating mothers, feed interval for babies etc. (5); Kitchen gardening to utilise drain water of the house or unused space in the fields and growing fruit trees in the courtyard (2); Care of grains by storage in tins etc. and use of insecticides (2); Care of woollen clothes (2).

During M.M. meetings the women even if they are not the members of the M.M. are encouraged to attend the meetings.

Whenever the members feel that there is nothing new or special to discuss, they utilise their time in organising a 'Kirtan' (singing religious songs in praise of God). Conducting Kirtan is even otherwise a common activity of various M.Ms.

5. <u>Obstacles in the Progress of Work:</u>

The members feel that Pradhan is doing her best to put M.M. on sound footings. But it can progress still better provided M.M. gets desired support and facilities. Certain requirements of the M.M. as pointed out during the

meeting are enumerated below. The official explanation for the same wherever available is given side by side.

Though the M.M. got itself registered on 1.10.87, no training has been imparted to the office bearers at Nilokheri Training Centre so far. They should get training to equip themselves to do their job in a better way.

The official explanation is that the very question of having two separate M.Ms. in this Village is under reference to the state headquarter (Point I). The training part of the members will be taken care of as soon as a decision is taken in this respect.

There is only a primary school for girls in the village. Hence most of the girls are not able to pursue their studies further. The parents feel hesitant to send young girls to other village for higher education. If a senior school is opened in the village for girls then M.M. can motivate parents to educate them further. The Mukheya Seveka pointed out that this question is being pursued by the B.D.O. vigourously and it is very likely that a Senior School will be started in the

village shortly.

5.3 The M.M. members desire to grow fruit trees as suggested by M.S. or G.S. occasionally but because of termites in the soil they are not able to do so. They are keen to find out a solution to it.

5.4 There is shortage of drinking water. The Panchayat should get well (s) dug out to solve the problem of the women till the water pipes are laid down in the village. The members complained that no one pays attention towards this aspect.

On this point it was pointed out to the Pradhan that she too was once a 'Panch' in the village Panchayat, then why did not she do any thing for facilitating water availability for village women ? Her immediate response was who listens to women members ?

Possible Ways to Strengthen the Mahila Mandal:

A few suggestions are given to put the M.M. on better footings to find solution to their problems. The concerned agencies can ponder over the possibilities of implementing the same.

6.1 There is a need to establish close linkage between the M.M. and the other developmental agencies so that the office bearers may contact them freely and frequently to discuss their problems and get suitable remedial information for the same. The developmental agencies may be instructed by their concerned departments to give special attention to the M.M. office bearers problems when-ever they approach them. This recognition will develop self confidence in the members and increase the social status of the M.M. at no extra cost to the state exchequer. Side by side this process will facilitate and accelerate the percolation of benefits of the various developmental schemes to the persons at the grass-root level.

6.2 Going one step ahead the M.M. may be used as a forum by the various developmental agencies to disseminate information about various schemes and to get feed back about their utility and proper distribution of benefits to the concerned persons. For example an enthusiastic person like the M.M. Pradhan can be motivated to work as a watch dog for Aganwari, field staff of the Health

Department, school teachers etc. to ensure better service to the community.

6.3 There is an urgent need for some kind of enrichment material for the M.Ss. and G.Ss. which may widen their outlook and make them more knowledgeable about the world around. This will enable them to broaden the mental horizon of the M.M. members. Repetition of the same information bores the listener and the informer.

6.4 Some concrete steps must be taken to educate M.M. members to put forth their problems in a more assertive way with the village Panchayat. Even the women 'Panch' should be made aware of their duties towards village women and made to understand that they are not nominated for ornamental participation in the Panchayat meeting but should assert their rights and understand the valueof their signatures on the resolutions and decisions of the Panchayat.

6.5 Mahila Mandals should have some say in the nomination of women Panch in the village Panchayat.

7/ Overall View

The M.M. gives an impression of a lively agency in the village. It is heartening to note that women are not only getting aware of their problems but are anxious to find out solutions to the same. The M.M. can be termed as a rich unexploited source which can be made use of in empowering rural women and restoring equality of status for them in the spirit it has been envisaged in the NPE (1986)

Khark Khurd

(Block Kalanaur, District Rohtak).

1. Introduction

Khark Khurd is about 14 km. from Kalanaur. Majority of inhabitants in this village are Rajputs. A Mahila Mandal (M.M.) was initiated in this village on 4.9.84 (Registration Number 324). Since its inception Ms. Shanti Devi is the M.M. Pradhan. She is a Rajput middle aged bold women. She had been a social worker and worked with the ex-Health Minister intensively in the villages.

2. Composition

The M.M. has 25 members. Out of this number 18 are Rajputs, 2 Brahmins, 3 Scheduled Caste and 2 belong to Backward Caste. All the office bearers belong to Rajput community.

3. Analysis of Activities

The Pradhan has kept a systematic record of the meetings of the M.M. from 24.4.84 to-date. Analysis of the record reveals that during the

first 8-months of introduction of the M.M. in 1984, the M.M. conducted 24 meetings. In 1988, twenty two meetings were held. In 1986 only 15 meetings were convened. In 1987 no meeting was held and in 1988 upto 5.12.88 they met only 4 times.

3.1 An analysis of items of discussion during these meetings revealedthat their talks revolved around election of office bearers; preparation of various food items, pickles, sauce; need for small savings; keeping the home and surroundings clean; use of improvised duethimc; smokeless choolhas; evils of dowry system and necessity to uproot it; family planning; kitchen garden; balanced diet for children; need for growing fruit trees; construction of improvised bathrooms in the homes; proper storage of grains; repair of old clothes; stitching of clothes like frock, suit and 'Kirtan.

3.2 The members are happy that they have learnt the preparation of ground nut Gajjak, Suzi ka Halwa,

Bajare ka Daleya, Prontha of Methi and Bathua, tomato sauce, lemon sharbat, pickles of carrots, ginger, mangoes etc. They say now they understand the importance of small savings, family planning, keeping their homes clean and other good ideas suggested by the Mukheya Sevoka and Gram Sevoka. Now they desire to know something new. They get fed up when the same talks are repeated in the meetings. This possibly explains the decrease of the number of M.M. meetings in the subsequent years. In the beginning the women were enthusiastic to attend the meetings as every time they expected and learnt something new. When they felt that the same old ideas were discussed in the meetings they stopped taking much interest.

4. <u>Observations and Suggestions:</u>

4.1 Taking a clue from point 3.2 above it is very essential that orientation courses may be held for the Mukheya Sevekas (M.S.) and the Gram Sevekas (G.S.) at regular intervals to acquaint

them with the information which we desire to disseminate through them to the rural women. The record of the meetings reveal that M.S. or G.S. had never discussed about the need of educating girls. They are not even aware whether any Non-formal or Adult Education Centre exists in the village. But one point is clear that if Women's Studies Unit wishes to reach the rural women at the grass-root level, them Mukhiya Sevekas and Gram Sevekas can be developed into a powerful task force to bring desired awareness and change in the rural folk. If proper input is given then M.M. can help a lot in realising the targets of universalisation of elementary education within the stipulated period. The orientation programmes can be chalked out in close collaboration of the State Training Centre at Nilokheri (Haryana)

4.2 Another important point observed during the visit was that the women are very fond of going on tours. It is felt that the possibility of organising trips for them may be explored. Ministry of Railway and other government agencies engaged in the welfare and upliftment of women may be approached to arrange subsidised trips for the M.M. members. These excursions, visits to educational institutions and income generating projects being run by women are sure to give them a good deal of expoeure at a very nominal cost to the public exchequer.

4.3 It was painful to note that rural women have low self image. Most of their men are either in State Police Department or army and in their absence though they look after the agricultural fields, rear up children, run the household yet they do not consider themselves as equal to men. They even discriminate between sons and daughters and have a strong feeling that daughters are to be married off and they belong to 'other house'. If there is no son then there is no life worth living for

the parents and their ancestral lineage is broken for ever.

4.3.1 There is a dire need to bring awareness in these women so that they may develop self confidence and positive self image of themselves and inculcate the same in their daughters to set the ball rolling in the positive direction. The Mukheya Sevekas and Gram Sevekas can be very helpful in this process provided they are themselves provided the right type of knowledge and training.

4.4 There are two Aganwaries in the village. According to the latest decision by the state government M.M. Pradhan should supervise their activities to ensure proper functioning of the same. But Pradhan was not aware of it. Some system need be worked out to avoid such communication gaps. The M.M. Pradhan should also be acquainted properly with the details of the scheme and job chart of Aganwari incharge before she is given the responsibility to supervise the same.

4.5 It is felt that the M.M. Pradhan should be changed after two years as required under the scheme. If the same women is repeatedly elected then she loses interest and other women are also deprived of their right to head the M.M. Mukheya Sevoka should encourage other women to come forward and learn to hold responsible position in the village.

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Patwapur

(Block Kalanaur, District Rohtak)

Introduction

Patwapur is about 20 kilometer from Rohtak and 10 kilometer from Kalanaur. It is a village predominantly inhabited by Punjabies. There are two Aganwaries and a co-educational school upto 8th class. A registered Mahila Mandal (M.M) was started in the village in the year 1987 (Registration No.2354)

2 Composition of the Mahila Mandal

It is a newly started Mahila Mandal (M.M). Only once the election of its office bearers have been held. It has 20 members. Out of these 12 are Punjabies belonging to different castes and migrated hereafter partition of the country in the year 1947. The remaining number consists of 5 Backward Class, one Scheduled Caste and 2 Jat women. The M.M Pradhan Ms. Maherder Kaur who is unanimously elected is a Punjabi. Out of the remaining 7 office bearers, one is a Harijan and 6 are Punjabies.

3. Analysis of the Activities of Mahila Mandal :

3.1 Analysis of the records of the M.M from 22.8.87 to-date indicates that during 1987 seven meetings and during the year 1988 fifteen meeting were held.

3.2 During the 22 meetings the discussions revolved around election of the office bearers of the M.M; the methodology of getting the M.M registered; family planning programme; use of dustbins; cleanliness of surroundings; need of ventilators in the homes; enrolment of more members for the M.M; utility of kitchen garden; growing fruit trees, diet suitable for children; utility of small saving deposits; provision of shelves for keeping utensils; proper storage of grains; immunisation of children against diseases; care of pregnant mothers; importance of adult education; background of celebrating festivals; and participation in M.M Sammelan at the district level.

4. <u>Certain Observations and Suggestions</u>:

Possibly the Mahila Mandal accords no importance to the education of girls because in none of its 22 meetings held during the last 2 years ever any reference has been made to this important aspect. The question of adult education has been touched only once in a running reference on 27.9.88 whereas most of the office bearers cannot even write their names and thumb impressions are obtained to get their approval.

4.2 The village has a co-educational school upto 8th class. The girls who are interested in further studies have to go to Kalanaur which is about 10 kilometer from the village. But membres of the M.M have not pointed towards the problem and the necessity of opening a high and a senior high school for the girls at Patwapur. This can be taken as an indicator of low importance given to the education of girls by the villagers.

4.3 The members and even the supervisory staff were not aware of the existence of non-formal education centre in the village.

4.4 It is requested that Mukheya Seveka (M.S) and the Gram Seveka (G.S) should give importance to the educational aspect of girls and put in efforts to to solicit the active cooperation of the members of the M.M in the enrolment and retention of girls in the educational institutions. It appears that State Education Department has never taken note of this important agency which can play a vital role in furtherance of the girls' education in the state. If proper orientation is given, them M.S and G.S can effectively carry the massage of education to the grass-roots in the far flung villages and help a lot in this stupendous task.

4.5 It was felt that women in this village are very hard working with no inhibition to take up any work which may help them in monetary gain. Such are the favourable locations to initiate any income

generating projects for the economic upliftment of rural women. Such efforts can be instrumental in making them self-supporting and independent thinker.

4.6 The women in this village are particular about keeping their homes neat and tidy. But they do not hesitate to throw the garbage in the streets. There is a need to educate them to come out of the narrow shell of self-centredness and consider that keeping their surroundings clean is equally important for keeping them healthy in the long run.

4.7 One office bearer of the M.M. attended the M.M. Sammelan held on 21.11.88 at the District level. It is very much expected of the members who attend such meetings to share the proceedings with other members on their return to the village. Almost one month has passed but no such meeting has been called by the Pradhan to acquaint members with the ideas talked about in the Sammelan. Mukheya Seveka and Gram Seveka

may make note of it and ensure that proper dissemination of the ideas takes place among the M.M. members.

4.8 Mukheya Seveka and Gram Seveka should have constant contacts with the various developmental agencies and motivate them to come to this village frequently to acquaint women with various schemes. Some how or the other these women give an impression that they are keen to take advantage of any scheme which may help in the furtherance of economic gains for them. The supervisory staff can harness this element in developing self confidence and positive self image in them.

Khark Kalan

(Block Kalanaur, District Rohtak)

1. Khark Kalan is a village predominately population by Thakurs (Rajputs). It is about 14 kilometer from Kalanaur. It has a Mahila Mandal (M.M.) which was registered on 27th June, 1984 (Registration number 171). Thirty eight women are its members. Out of these 30 are Thakur, One Brahmin, 2 Scheduled Caste and 5 belong to Backward class. All the eight office bearers belong to Thakur community.

2. Since its inception Smt. Nirmala Devi was leading the M.M. Her husband had been Sarpanch of the village. At present another person has been elected as Sarpanch. Ms. Nirmal Devi has become incharge of an Anganwari in the village and is getting pay from the government for that. Hence she could not continue as the Pradhan of M.M. as per its rules and regulations.

3. It appears that during her tenure, Nirmala Devi was not a popular leader in the community. The members gave an impression that she took very little interest in organising 'Kirtan' or any other welfare activities. As she belongs to a rich family of landlords, the members felt hesitent

to go to her house. She too was not very hospitable and also rarely encouraged members to feel free to come to her house. Whenever Mukhsya Seveka or Gram Seveka visited the Mahila Mandal she avoided informing other women about their visit.

Most of the M.M. members are not very happy with her behaviour even as an incharge of the Anganwari. They feel that the refreshment due to children is not being distributed adequately. They also doubt the integrity of the incharge.

On 18.7.88 a new Pradhan has been elected by the M.M. members. The names of the present office bearers are stated below.

Sl. No.	Name	Status	Remarks
1.	Ms.Kirpa Devi	Pradhan	1. All the office bearers belong to 'Thakur' community.
2.	Ms. Uma Devi	Up-Pradhan	2. Except Pradhan Up-Pradhan and Joint Secy. all other members are illiterate. They cannot even put their signatures.
3.	Ms. Shanti	Secy.	
4.	Ms. Janaki	Treasurer	
5.	Ms. Nirmala	Joint Secy.	
6.	Ms. Sugna	Project Member	
7.	Ms. Bhori	- do -	
8.	Ms. Urmila	- do -	

5. The new M.M. Pradhan is a humble women and has a zeal to do something concrete and creative for the welfare of women. She is interested to know about the activities which M.M. should take up.

6. She was informed that Safai Karmchari appointed under the newly introduced scheme for the village will work under the supervision of M.M. They should now ensure that the work is done properly by them. She was also advised to visit Anganwari and see that proper amount of refreshment is given to the children. Other routine activities which a M.M. should take up were also explained to her. It was repeatedly emphasised that M.M. should ensure that no girl in the age-group 6-14 remains illiterate in the village.

7. After discussions with the M.M. Pradhan it was felt that once a person gets some power or status then that brings a change in her self image. She feels empowered and a sort of self confidence is generated in her to do certain activities successfully.

8. Previous records of the meetings were not available with the present Pradhan. Hence an analysis of the same could not be done. The current register of activities indicated details of the meetings from 6.6.88 to date. The analysis of the record

reveals that 22 meetings have been held during this period. The items mostly discussed during these meetings were the suggestion for opening of small saving fund account in the post office by the members, importance of small family norms; kitchen garden; health care of children; care of clothes; bad effects of dowry on the society; proper maintenance of household items; cleanliness in the house; and election of new Pradhan.

9. Immediate Problems of the Mahila Mandal and Suggestions to Overcome the Same:

9.1 The members feel that their foremost problem is the lack of proper toilet facilities for women at home as well as in the community. The administration should take up the problem on priority basis. They repeatedly pointed out that it is very inconvenient and unsafe specially for young girls and old women to go to far off fields at early or late hours of the day for this purpose.

9.2 There should be some place earmarked for holding activities of the M.M. The village Panchayat should make provision for the same. The members do not feel free to conduct 'Kirtan' or meetings in the house of a particular person, may be the M.M. Pradhan.

9.3. The villagers have very little interest in keeping their surroundings clean. The women clean their homes and throw the garbage in the lane. They do not discourage children to defecate in the lanes. The Panchayat should fine such people or M.M. should be empowered to fine such persons.

9.4 The state has appointed Safai Karmcharies for the villages but they will be of very little use unless the lanes are made 'pucca' and some sort of drainage facilities are introduced. The Panchayat should levy some new tax or increase Chulha tax and spend that amount in constructing, repairing and maintenance of lanes and providing

suitable drainage system. The amount thus charged will help in providing healthy surroundings for living to the inhabitants and as such work as a preventive measure to save them from various diseases.

9.5 If M.M. members are to supervise the activities of the Anganwari and Safai Karamcharies then details of the schemes may be explained to the office bearers. They should know that how much ration is allocated for each child per day and at what time the children should get the same, the chart of Anganwari Incharge, Safai Karamcharies and other details should be known to the M.M. workers. Mukheya Seveka and the Gram Seveka informed them that they will let them know the full details of the schemes.

9.6 As the present Pradhan is new to the situation, she needs some sort of orientation, Mukheya Seveka or the Gram Seveka may call newly elected Pradhans to the block headquarter for a day or so

and acquaint them with their rights and liabilities. If possible they may accompany them to some good M.Ms and observe their functioning.

9.7 Most of the members of the present M.M. are the women who have limited spare time at their disposal as they not only look after their homes but also work in the fields to augment home economy. Need of the situation is to make best use of their spare time for upliftment of rural women. The routine discussions about the same topics repeatedly do not interest them much. Some other mechanism may be worked out to acquaint them with the different fields to enhance their knowledge and get them involved in the process of empowering rural women.

Mayna

(Kalanaur Block, District Rohtak)

1. An Overview:

The Mahila Mandal (M.M) at village Mayna is one of the oldest M.M in Kalanaur block. It is situated at the Rohtak-Jhajjar road. The craft centre and the Aganwari are being run in the 'Chopal' but M.M has not been allocated any place to hold its meetings. These are conducted in the house of the M.M Pradhan. It is not that the members donot feel the necessity of it. They do, but no agency has ever accorded much importance to their demand.

Since its inception Ms Indra Vati is heading the M.M. Though she is a middle aged women yet is lovingly called 'Dadi' (Grand mother) by all the members of the M.M. Even the official staff at the block level addresses her with this very word. She commands respect and appears as an embodiment of sobriety. Her husband is the

Sarpanch and in that capacity also she enjoys a status and her word has a say among the village folk. One of the member pointed out that whenever there is any problem we put 'Dadi' on the front. She is bold and does not hesitate to argue or confront any person for the just causes of the members of M.M.

2. Composition of the Mahila Mandal:

The present executive of the M.M has been formed recently. The elections of the office bearers were held on 6.9.88. The Mahila Mandal has 57 members at present. Out of these 17 are Jat and 40 belong to Backward Class. It was suggested to the M.M Pradhan that she should mobilise scheduled caste women also for membership of the M.M. The time has come when women should come out of the shells of caste and work for a common cause of upliftment of all women. In response to it she nodded in affirmative but how far she was convinced and to what extent she will

sincerely put in her efforts in this direction is difficult to say.

The office bearers of the M.M are:

1.	Ms Indravati	Pradhan
2.	Ms Dhan Kaur	Up-Pradhan
3.	Ms Shakuntala	Secretary
4.	Ms Angoori	Treasurer
5.	Ms Champa	Joint Secretary
6.	Ms Kanta	Member
7.	Ms Lado	- Do -
8.	Ms Sheelavati	- Do -

Most of the office bearers have undergone training at the state training centre at Nilokheri. They have very pleasant memories of the same and feel that it imparted them a good deal of outing and practical information. They feel that more members of the M.M may be given opportunity for this type of training. Official explanation for this aspect is that in the scheme there is a provision for training of only the initial

five office bearers when a M.M is started and it gets a registration grant of Rs. 1500/- in the beginning. So other members cannot be sent to Nilokheri for training.

2.2 Only recently a member viz. Ms Parvati had gone on a state sponsored study tour to Agra, Bralie, Varanasi, Pantnagar, Lucknow, Allahabad and Ayodhya. Fifty percent of the expenses of the trip have been met by her. Other members feel happy to share her experiences and are desirous to avail such facilities themselves provided the expenses are meted out by the state government.

3. Working of the Mahila Mandal:

Available records of the M.M. for the period July-Oct. 1985 and Feb. 87 to October 1988 were analysed. During this period 33 meetings of the M.M. were held. Details of the same are given on the next page.

Number of Meetings of the Mahila Mandal:

M.M.	Yr.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
M	85	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	1	-	-
	86	Record not readily available.											
Y	87	-	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
N	88	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	3	-	-

Total

These 33 meetings were utilised by the members for discussing the following items. The frequency with which each item was discussed during this period is indicated in the paranthesis:

Cleanliness of clothes, home (specially necessity of kitchen and bath place with concrete floorings, proper arrangement of utensils, boxes etc.), surroundings and importance of ventilators in the homes (22); Use of dustbins and necessity of covering the garbage from health point of view(5);

Family planning techniques and required co-operation of Mahila Mandal members to motivate village women for tubectomy etc. (9); Family Welfare programmes which cover immunisation, need for nutritious diet for children, pregnant and lactating mothers, feed interval for babies etc. (6); Kitchen gardening to utilise drain water of the house or unused space in the fields and growing fruit trees in the courtyard (5); Care of grains by storage in tins etc. and use of insecticides (4); Need for adopting timely measures as precautions from on-setting winter and summer heat and diseases that follow (2); Care of woollen and other clothes (2); Motivating women to learn tailoring, embroidery, craft works for home economy (1); Enrolment of children in the school(2); Importance of adult education and imparting practical knowledge of writing name and counting numbers to the members (6); Importance of small savings (9); Importance of taking up certain projects for the betterment of the financial

position of members e.g. preparation of readymade garments, soap, charging rent for M.M. utencils etc. (9); Election of office bearers, information about the working of M.M./Enrolment of new members (2); Social evils like dowry, early marriage (1)

3.2 A project to improve the financial position of M.M is being run with the help of the Mukheya Seveka and Gram Seveka. Tea and washing soap have been purchased from the wholesale market and are being sold to the members with a marginal profit. The 50% of the financial gain will go to the M.M funds and the remaining 50% will be for the M.M Pradhan.

3.3 Mahila Mandals have a few big utencils which are given on rent to the people in the village. The rent thus collected is deposited in the M.M. accounts. Through this source they collect about Rs.300 per annum for the M.M fund.

3.4 The M.M members are proud to say that there are no serious mother-in-law and daughter-in-law conflict in the families of the members. They love and respect the sentiments of their daughter-in-laws in the families. No dowry problem has ever crop up till todate in their families. It appears that the credit for developing this attitude goes to the Mukheya Seveka. She herself is an emancipated women and the way she puts up her ideas before the members in the meetings is worth noticing. For example during the last meeting the members pointed out that they are collecting funds to construct a temple in the village. The M.S. listened them patiently and gave them a thorough outlet. Thereafter in their dialect she told them that every house where there is peace, harmony, daughter-in-laws are allowed privacy and free movements with their husbands, no debt on the family, no earning by usurping the share of the poor or other

fellow beings etc.is a t.mple in the real sense of the word. It is perhaps more righteous to collect and spend this amount on starting some small scale production units for the rural women which may better their economic status or to get a well dug out or a hand pump installed at a common place than to construct a temple.

3.5 Sometimes back the members were provided big tins for proper storage of grains at the subsidised rates by the state government. One third of the cost of these tins were met by the state and 2/3rd of the same were paid by the individuals. The members feel that government occasionally thinks of helping M.Ms and they suggested that there should be systematic and regular schemes to help M.M till they come up to take off stage to take care of themselves. This is a suggestion worth consideration by the authorities.

4. Existing Problems of the Mahila Mandal:

A few problems which need immediate attention of the authorities were put forth by the M.M. These are stated below.

4.1 Some place for conducting meetings of the M.M may be provided by the village Panchayat and B.D.O. should intervene to get the same for them.

4.2 There is shortage of drinking water facilities, steps may be taken to solve this problem.

4.3 There is only a primary school for girls in the village, steps may be taken on priority basis to upgrade it.

4.4 The scheme of providing smokeless chullahas may be initiated in the village for the convenience of the rural women.

5. A Few Suggestions:

Women in general have experienced so much of negligence that by now they have got used to live in the world of ignorance and for awakening

them out of this slumber it is necessary that they should be given more and more exposure to the outer world. Educational trips on large scale may be organised at the state expense and a good number of women may be provided opportunity to avail such occasions. Such exposures are likely to widen their mental horizon and outlook towards life and consequently help in improving their self image. Thus it is worth spending money on these types of projects by the state exchequer.

5.1 The items discussed in the M.M meetings do help in improving the quality of life of the members. But this time can be still better utilised by bringing awareness in the women about the necessity of improving their status in the society. For this purpose there is a need to organise enrichment programmes for the Mukheye Seveka and the Gram Sevekas so that in turn they may convey the same ideas to the members of the M.Ms. This will equip them to make them

aware about the need and their right to take decisions and self realisation to improve their lot themselves. The enlightened members of the M.M. in turn will be able to help effectively in the enrolment and retention of girls in the educational institutions and implementation of the other national programmes.

5.2 For improving the economic status of the members some production projects with systematic sale network may be started in the village instead of purchasing things from whole sale market and selling at the same retail price in the village. The projects may be run on co-operative basis for encouraging all the members to take interest in the same and also to have more economic gains. The spordic efforts taken up to improve economic position may not be of lasting help and long term economic gains to the institution of M.M. or its members.

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Kanehli

(Block Kalanaur, District Rohtak)

Kanehli is a small village situated at about 25 kilometers from Kalanaur. A registered Mahila Mandal (M.M.) is being run here since 1978-79. A dynamic middle aged Brahmin woman named Santosh Devi is the Pradhan at Present.

She is running the term of M.M. Pradhan for the second time. The following are the other office bearers of the Mahila Mandal:

S.No.	Name	Status	Caste	Remarks
1.	Ms. Kamla Devi	Up-Pradhan	Brahmin	
2.	Ms. Murti Devi	Sachiv	- do -	
3.	Ms. Choto Devi	Jt. Secy.	Khati	Backward Class
4.	Ms. Phoolpati	Treasurer	Khati	- do -
5.	Ms. Bohti	Project Member	Jat	
6.	Ms. Risalo	- do -	Jat	
7.	Ms. Naina Devi	- do -	Jat	

In all there are 27 members in the M.M. Their caste wise position is as follows

Caste	Number
Jat	17
Brahmin	3
Backward Class	7
Total	27

There is a perfect harmony among the members and the Pradhan enjoys the confidence of all the members. When it was pointed out to her that how is it that there is no member belonging to Scheduled Castes. Her reply was that it never struck her mind that they should also form a part of M.M. She however agreed to direct her efforts to motivate Scheduled Caste Women to become members of the M.M. and members of other castes to accommodate them.

Meetings of the M.M. are held almost twice in a month. Duration of the meetings depends upon the free time available with the members. There are some months,

when they are busy with the works concerning agriculture or festivals (Teej, Thayohars) then they meet only for half an hour or so but otherwise they sit together for a longer period when Mukheya Seveka (M.S.) or Gram Seveka (G.S.) visit the M.M. Gram Seveka, visits the M.M. once or twice in a month and shares their happinesses and sorrows. She is just like a friend coming from the town with fresh news and the members look forward to meet her.

An analysis of the record of the proceedings of the meetings of the M.M. held between 11-1-86 and 26-10-88 was made to find out how the time spent in the meetings is utilised by the members and the concerned G.S.

The record reveals that 61 meetings were held during this period.

Month-wise record of the meetings is as follows:-

Number of Meetings Held of the Mahila Mandal

M.M.	Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Kanehli	1986	1	1	2	1	1	-	2	2	2	2	2	2	18
	1987	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	21
	1988	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	1	3	3			22
														61

Efforts were made to cull out the discussion points during these meetings. The frequency of each point referred to in these meetings is given in the parenthesis. Main discussion points during these meetings were: Cleanliness of clothes, home (specially necessity of kitchen and bath place with concrete floorings, proper arrangements of utencils, boxes etc.), surroundings and importance of ventilators in the homes, (43); Use of dusbins and necessity of covering the garbage from health point of view (6); Family Planning techniques and required co-operation of Mahila Mandal members to motivate village women for tubectomy etc. (20); Family Welfare programmes which cover immunisation; need for nutritious diet for children, pregnant and lactating mothers, feed intervals for babies etc. (14); Development of proper habits among children and precautions against the bad habits or misbehaviour, smoking, theft etc. which children develop during adolescent period (2); Use of home-made medicines (2); Kitchen gardening to utilise drain water of the house

and growing fruit trees in the courtyard (8); Care of grains by storage in tins etc. and use of insecticides (6); Preservation of food articles, preparation of pickles, squash etc. (5); Need for adopting timely measures as precautions from on setting winter and summer heat and the diseases that follow (1); Care of woollen clothes (4); Motivating women to learn tailoring, embroidery, craft works for home economy (3); Utility of smoke-less Chullahas (1); Enrolment of children in the school (3); Importance of adult education and imparting practical knowledge of writing names and counting numbers to the members (7); Importance of small savings (11); Information about the rationale of celebrating national and other festivals (2); Importance of taking up certain projects for the betterment of the financial position of members e.g. preparation of readymade garments, soap, charging rent for M.M. utencils etc. (10); Election of office bearers (2).

Analysis of the discussion points indicate that major portion of the time of the meetings have been spent on cleanliness drive, family planning, small saving campaign,

motivating members to take interest in growing fruit trees and initiating any co-operative production projects for their economic betterments.

Outcome of the Efforts Made:

Outcome of these constant discussions is that the members are learning to keep their homes clean. They make improvised dustbins with bricks and cover it with wooden planks. They have started understanding the importance of proper ventilation and need for providing space for windows and ventilators in the living rooms. The State government had provided them tin boxes for storing grains at subsidised rate and they understand their utility and make use of the same.

In this village Aganwari is run in the Chopal and this has helped in eliminating the social taboo that women can not go to the Chopal.

For improving the financial standing of the M.M. about 75 kilo washing soap has been purchased from the wholesale market in the town @ Rs. 8.50 per kilo. This is being sold to the members @ Rs. 10 per kilo. Half of the

profit will go to the Mahila Mandal account and the Pradhan will keep the other half with her.

As the other members are not getting any share in the profit, they are indifferent about the success of this venture. It is felt that such type of projects may be run on co-operative basis to encourage the interest and participation of all the M.M. members.

The utencils which are the property of M.M. are given on rent to the villages and rent thus charged is credited to M.M. saving fund account. But the income from this activity is only Rs.10 or 12 per month. This is too meagre an amount to improve any financial standing of the M.M.

Specific Problems of the Mahila Mandal and a Few Suggestions to Cross the Hurdles:

No monthly subscription is paid by the members. They pay only membership fee of Rs.5 or Rs.2 (B.C.), that too with great persuasion. As such for improving the financial status of the M.M. there is an urgent need to introduce some co-operative production Centre(s).

The scheme of providing smoke-less Choollahas has not been introduced in the village so far. After discussions with the members it appeared that they are receptive to the idea of installing these ovens in their homes. District authorities may make use of this situation and try to introduce these ovens in this village.

A great lacuna in the scheme is that training to the office bearers is imparted only once after it gets registered. The tenure of the office bearers is only two years and these members go on changing but there is no provision to train the subsequent groups. There is a need to work out some plan to organise training programme for the new office bearers of the M.M. If financial constraints stand in the way of sending them to Nilokheri State Training Centre then some arrangement at the block or district level may be made to equip them for the job.

The members feel the necessity of M.M. Bhawan where they may hold their meetings and keep their records. If there is a place like this then village women will feel

free to go there, otherwise they do have reservations to come to Pradhan's house to attend meetings every fortnight. The provision of a separate Bhawan for them will develop a feeling of belonging to the organisation and commitment to the cause of women upliftment.

The Pradhan was of the view that Panchayat can spare land from the 'Samlat Land' and construct a room for the M.M. meetings, provided there is a will to promote the scheme. District authorities can explore the possibilities with village Sarpanch to solve this problem.

The M.M. movement can be made more popular if the C.S. or M.S. could help in solving the individual problems of the village women by establishing close linkage with the other developmental agencies. For example Choto Devi who is also one of the office bearers is worried about her young daughter-in-law's future who has become a widow. She is keen that someone should let her know the how can the young lady earn her livelihood with dignity. There was another married girl who is matriculate but

not pulling on nicely with her in-laws, so is staying with her parents for the last eight years. She wanted to have some guidance for her economic betterment. There may be many more cases of this type in the village. If G.S. or M.S. are able to help them out of these situations they can perhaps win the confidence of the rest of the village women.

The M.M. office bearer pointed out that they are discouraged by their menfolk from participating in any activities for the emancipation of village women. They resent their spending time for such activities without any remuneration. They often say "The Bhanjees (G.S. or M.S.) get pay for the works from the government but what do you get. You un-necessarily roam about in the village and waste your time in conducting meetings. You should better stay at home and do something productive instead of following the suggestions of Bhanjees".

The situation warrants that something must be done to impart some economic benefits or social recognition

to these office bearers for involving them in the upliftment of rural women. Most of these women belong to lower middle class so it will be perhaps difficult to get any sincere work done through them on voluntary basis.

BANIYANI

(Block Kalanaur, District Rohtak)

Introduction:

The Mahila Mandal (M.M.) at village Baniyani is about 14 km. from Kalanaur. The M.M. was started on 1[illegible].10.86 on ad-hoc basis but it was registered on 1.10.87 (Registration No.2350). The village is inhabited by a mixed group of Punjabies, Thakurs, Jats and other castes. It has two Aganwaries and a high school with co-education. A good number of Punjabies have gas connections for the purpose of cooking, television sets and well furnished houses. They have been allotted agricultural land in the village after they came to India, after the partition of the country in the year 1947.

Now most of them are the owners of big agricultural farms and use tractors. All this gives an impression that they are better economically placed than the other castes in the village. Most of them are keen to educate the girls till they continue to take interest in the studies. From their own side they do not make any special efforts to motivate them

to carry on with their stdies. The reason behind this indifference may be that they attach low importance to the education of girls.

Composition of the Mahila Mandal

The Mahila Mandal is being headed by Smt. Kunti Devi, a middle aged, religious Punjabi women. She is the first elected Pradhan of the M.M. which has been started only about two years back. It has 20 members at present. Out of these 17 are Punjabi (belonging to different castes), 2 Brahmins, 2 Scheduled Castes and 3 Backward Class.

2.1 The M.M. Executive has 7 other members beside the Pradhan. Out of those 7 office bearers, 3 are Punjabi, 2 Harijan, 1 Backward Class and 1 Brahmin.

2.2 By observing the overt behaviour of the members one gathers an impression that there is harmony among M.M. members and office bearers. They do not believe in casteism.

3. Analysis of the Activities of the Mahila Mandal:

The analysis of the record of the M.M. from 13.10.86 to Dec. 1988 reveals that during this period 30 meetings of

the M.M. were held as detailed below:

Year	No. of meetings
1986 (in 3 months)	3
1987	9
1988	18
Total	30

Note: (i) During 1986 the M.M. was started late and only 3 months of the year were left to convene meetings.

(ii) During 1987 it was at the take off stage.

(iii) During 1988 the 18 meetings in 12 months is a good record as per requirements of the scheme.

3.1 During the above mentioned 30 meetings the discussions revolved around election of M.M. Pradhan and other office bearers; registration of M.M; enrolment of new members; family planning; small saving schemes; storage of grains; balanced diet; growing trees in the village; keeping homes and surroundings clean; income generating projects; smokeless Chullahas; proper arrangement of things in the homes; nutritious diet for growing children; concrete floor for washing utensils; use of empty wooden boxes as dustbins; immunization programme for children; balanced diet for pregnant women and lactating mothers; and background of celebrating various festivals.

4. Observations and Suggestions:

4.1 The M.M. Pradhan is a religious minded women. It is believed that once a month the goddess (Mata) overpowers her and if any women puts any question to the Pradhan, she gets correct answer to her querry about incidents or future happenings. In this way women have great respect for her and faith in whatever she suggests and advises.

4.1.1 It is very difficult to comment on the validity of this process on the basis of one day's visit to the village and hearsay of the members of the M.M. But one point which can be safely arrived at is, that Mukheya Sevaka (M.S.) by the Gram Sevaka can enhance the status of the Pradhan and motivate her to advise rurah women to enroll and retain their daughters in the schools. She may also motivate elderly women to attend the Adult Education Centre. The Pradhan can be oriented on the messages which are required to be conveyed to women effectively. women have great respect for

4.2 and proceedings of the meetings reveal that too much emphasis has been laid on the installation of smoke less Chullahs whereas in most of the houses there are gas village cooking for the purpose of cooking. It appears that

these ovens wherever installed in the village are not being used frequently. The well to families are not using the same because they have gas connections and with the poor these are not popular because they feel that the consumption of the fuel in these ovens is much more than the ordinary ovens used by women in the villages.

4.2.1 It is suggested that the introduction of new schemes should not be advocated as a routine in all the villages. Such schemes may be tried out on a pilot project before these are suggested for general use.

4.3 Many state departments are utilising the expertise of Mukheya Sevekas and Gram Sevekas for conveying their messages at the grass root level in the villages and are also taking their active co-operation in achieving their set targets. District Education Officer and District Adult and Non-formal Education Officer can also solicit their co-operation in achieving targets of education and women's equality set under the New Policy on Education 1986 and the POA.

4.3.1. If some tangible results in the field of education and generating awareness among the rural women about their

social and legal rights are to be obtained, then it is necessary that M.Ss. and G.Ss. should be properly equipped for this purpose. First of all there is a need to convince them about the need for developing positive self image among women and education as an effective instrument to bring about the desired change in them. Secondly they are to be oriented about the processes which can be adopted to bring about this change. The present situation is that learners (members of the M.Ms.) and the instructors (Mukhaya Sevekas and Grom Sevekas) are there as raw material. They need to be moulded in the desired moulds and that is the need of the time.

4.3.2 Women Studies Unit of the NCERT, New Delhi can take a lead in oriented key persons in such processes and they in turn organise training camps for Mukheya Sevekas (M.Ss.) and Grom Sevekas (G.Ss.) at the District Level. M.Ss. and G.Ss. can further pick up the thread and train M.M. Pradhans and other office bearers who in turn can set the ball rolling by putting in efforts to change the

attitudes of the M.M. members and other women in the village.

4.4 Most of the members of M.M. are illiterate. They can not even write their names. They may be motivated to acquire functional literacy by joining Adult Education Centre. In the 30 meetings held during 27 months only once the need for adult education has been discussed and the necessity of girl's education has never been touched. This speaks for the low priority accorded to the educational aspect by the M.Ms. in the village.

4.5 During the meetings of the M.M. many times the question of immunisation; balanced and nutritious diet for children had been discussed. These junctures can be made use of for emphasing the need for non-discriminatory attitude towards the female child as for as these aspects are concerned.

4.6 According to Rajput traditions their women are supposed to remain within the four walls of their homes. But in this village they have been influenced by the Punjabi culture. The hardworking Punjabi women not only work at home and rear up children but equally go to the agricultural fields and share responsibilities with their men.

This has put great impact on the mind of Rajput women. Now they also go out and work in the fields. Taking a clue from this point it is felt that women if united, crossing the barriers of class, caste and creed can surely help each other in mutual emancipation and upliftment. Mahila Mandals can play a positive role in bringing them together for mutual help and co-operation.

4.7 There is an urgent need for constructing public latrines specially for women in the village. Young girls and old women badly feel the necessity of these conveniences. It was suggested that M.M. Pradhan should take up the matter with the district administration through supervisory staff at the block level.

4.8 This M.M. has a great potential which can be exploited for the upliftment of women on social and economic fronts.

Nigana

(Block Kalanaur, District Rohtak)

1. **Introduction:**

1.1 The Village Nigana is about 8 Kilo Meter from the block headquarter at Kalanaur. It is a big village which has 10 thousand votes. It is inhabited by a mix of different castes viz Jats, Brahmin, Punjabies, Scheduled Castes and Backward Class.

1.2 There are 4 Aganwaries in the village. There is a separate school upto eighth class for girls. In the high school there is co-education. For further studies the children go to Kalanaur.

1.3 A Mahila Mandal (M.M.) was started on adhoc basis in the village on 10.3.87. Later on, it got registered on 1.10.87 (Registration Number 2352). As such it is a newly started M.M. to bring to-gether the rural women to enable them to work for mutual upliftment and improving their quality of life.

2. **Composition of the Mahila Mandal:**

2.1 There are 20 members in the M.M. Out of these 8 are Punjabies, 4 Jats, 3 Brahmins, 2 Scheduled Castes and

3 Backward Castes. Smt. Wanti Devi, who is a trained 'Dai' (Midwife) has been unanimously elected as the first Pradhan of the M.M. She is a middle aged, literate, smart, Punjabi women who is pleasant to talk to and gives an impression of a wise women. She believes that human relationship plays important role in motivating women to accept new ideas. She feels that no idea or Scheme can be imposed on the villagers because they pay no heed and just ignore if they are not convinced of the utility of the idea.

2.2 Seven other elected office bearers are there to share responsibilities of the Pradhan. They are all Punjabies. Out of the 7 office bearers2 are illiterate and cannot write even their names.

3. <u>Analysis of the Activities of the Mahila Mandal:</u>

3.1 An analysis of the record from 10.3.87 to 23.12.88 reveals that 38 meetings of the M.M. were convened during the period. During the year 1987 the number of such meetings was 22. The number decreased to 16 in the year 1988. An official explanation for such

decrease is the shortage of supervisory staff at block headquarter.

3.2 During the 38 meetings the discussions held around the health care of pregnant women and need for nutritious diet for them; decoration of their homes through making certain craft items; care of drinking water and ways to purify the same; need of ventilators and windows in the homes; health care of body and need for keeping one self clean; need for sending children to Aganwari; utility of kitchen garden; small saving schemes; storage of grains through putting insecticides and other improvised methods; 'Keertan' (religious gatherings); care of clothes; need for 'Pucca' floor for cleaning utencils and taking bath; growing fruit trees in the courtyards; need for keeping surroundings clean to protect oneself from mosquitoes; importance of tetnus toxoid injections in the case of any injury and during pregnancy as a precautionary measure; need for musical instruments for holding 'Kirtan' and collection of Rupees two from each of the members for

this purpose; adult education and learning-writing one's name; need for keeping kitchen clean and arranging things on shelves; use of dustbins and keeping streets clean; family planning programme; immunisation programme for children; enrolment of new members; and smokeless Choolahas.

Observations and Suggestions:

As per records of the M.M. all the office bearers are Punjabies. It is suggested that women from other castes should be involved in the M.M. executive. In the next election of the office bearers which is due, this point may be taken care of by the Gram Seveka. Atleast one member each from the weaker and other castes must be on the executive of the M.M. If need be the same may be nominated beside the elected members.

4.2 The meetings of the M.M. have been held either at the house of the Pradhan or the 'Sachiv' of the M.M. As long as M.M. Bhavan is not provided the meetings may also be held in the homes of other members of the Mahila Mandal. This is likely to give recognition

to the members and ensure their further involvement in the M.M. activities.

4.3 As the M.M. Pradhan is a trained midwife, most of the discussions have revolved around health care of pregnant women and children. Health care of aged may also be taken into consideration. Education has been discussed only twice during the span of 2 years. Only once the question of Aganwari was discussed on 14.4.87 and of adult education on 27.10.87 Education of girls and the adult women should be given due weightage.

4.3.1 One gathers an impression that girls in the village are more interested in learning stiching of clothes and other craft works rather than going to the schools. Recently when a craft teacher had been appointed, 22 girls had enrolled themselves for the craft course and more girls were likely to join when the centre starts functioning. Some of the enrolled girls belonging to weaker sections are even illiterate and the craft teacher will have to first impart them the knowledge of number and taking measurements.

4.3.2. Taking a clue from such response of the learners and their wards, it is felt that the need of the village is technical courses for the girls. Through these courses it is likely to be easier to motivate them for formal learning.

4.4 The members keep their homes neat and tidy but the surroundings require cleanliness. The administration at the block or Panchyat levels should make efforts to construct 'Pucca' streets in the village.

4.5 Some of the members are fond of growing fruit trees in their courtyards. Other women in the village may also be motivated to follow suit.

It is expected of the M.M. Pradhan and other members that they should work as agents of change for the rural women. They should not only follow the suggestions of the G.S. themselves but also motivate other rural women to implement the same.

4.6 Six members of the M.M. executive are literate and 2 are illiterate. They cannot write even their names. Efforts may be made by the Gram Seveka and the Pradhan

to encourage these office bearers and the other illiterate members to join adult education programme. It was disheartening to note that no one knew whether or not any Adult Education Centre is functioning in the village. This also speaks very low of the public relations of the District Adult Education and NFE office.

4.7 It is creditable that there is harmonious relationship among M.M. members and the question of high or low caste is non-existent. This may have developed because the Pradhan is a midwife by profession and she has to attend to the women irrespective of their castes. When any Pradhan is an emancipated woman then the values do get transferred in the community though the process may be slow.

4.8 The members are keen to know about the 'Nai Khabar' (fresh news from the town). They were thrilled when they were informed about the following news item published in Tribune dated 18.10.88.

KARNAL Dec. 17 - Haryana will provide soft loans and marketing facilities for Mahila Mandals on a priority basis. Thirty percent of the loans for milch cattle will be reserved for working women.

This was announced by Mr. Hukum Singh, Development Minister, while addressing a district-level convention of Mahila Mandal here last evening.

He said women leaders should be involved in the rural latrines programme. Each village of 2,000 population would be provided with a sweeper for latrine at government expense.

He stated that the Government would give liberal grants for building mahila bhawans in the rural areas.

4.8.1 It is felt that Gram Seveka (G.S.) should keep herself abreast about the information which may be of interest to the rural women. This will create a positive enrironment for strengthening the M.Ms. in the rural areas. They will wait for the G.S. and she will symbolise a sister from the town with fresh news.

4.8.2 Mukhiya Seveka and Gram Seveka are important links with the rural women. All possible efforts need to be put in to equip them for the job through providing literature, orientation and other possible means.

Sudana

(Block Kalanaur, District Rohtak)

1. **An Overview:**

1. Village Sudana is about 11 kilo meter from Rohtak and falls in Kalanaur block of the district. A Mahila Mandal was started in this village on 1.5.87 and Smt. Rama Devi was elected the Mahila Mandal Pradhan. The foundation grant received for the M.M was also deposited in the Post Office in the name of Smt. Rama Devi on 15.5.87. In the beginning there were 28 members representing different castes as detailed below:

Caste/Profession	Number
Jat	21
Brahmin	2
Lohar	1
Nai	1
Tat Tailor	1
Chamar	1
Harijan	1
	28

2. Smt. Rama Devi was regularly elected as Pradhan on 1.7.88. Everything was going on well till the election of the village Panchayat took place in August-September, 1988. In this election Smt. Rama Devi campaigned against Sh. Baldeva who was contesting for the seat of Sarpanch. But Sh. Baldeva got elected as Sarpanch. Thereafter, he is trying his best that Smt. Rama Devi should not remain the M.M. Pradhan. He instigated Ms. Mohra, a member of the M.M to enrol new members and get no confidence motion passed against Smt. Rama Devi. He has allured Ms. Mohra that he will put in all efforts to make her M.M Pradhan provided Ms. Rama Devi is removed from the scene.

3. Ms. Mohra has enrolled about 400 new members and has deposited Rs.1700 as the enrollment fee for these members. It is said that the Sarpanch is financially supporting this campaign against Smt. Rama Devi.

4. Smt. Rama Devi has also enrolled about 400 new members. As a prestige point she also desires to retain the Pradhanship of the M.M.

5. Smt. Rama Devi's late husband was in the army. She is getting family pention after her husband's death, running a pig farm, maintains a kitchen garden and financially she is a self reliant person. She is about 45 years of age. sturdy and appears to be popular among the women folk.

6. During the last two-three months the financial position of the M.M has become quite sound. There was Rs.6160 on 4.1.89 in the M.M saving fund account. Out of this amount Rs.4660 has been deposited as the membership fee by the M.M members and Rs.1500 has been received from the State Government as the foundation grant. Both the parties are trying to enroll more members.

6. The B.D.O. Kalanaur asked the present Pradhan to prove her majority in the general meeting of the M.M (formed by him on 28.12.88) to prove that

she still enjoys the confidence of the members.

7. More than 900 women attended the meeting on 28.12.88 As there is no provision of secret ballot system so it became difficult for the authorities to hold elections by counting raised hands of the members. Hence the decision was kept pending and the matter has been reported to the higher authorities for allowing the B.D.O. to hold fresh election of the M.M Pradhan through secret ballot.

8. Smt. Vidyotma, the Mukheya Seveka, who is a very social and wise person is of the view that let a little time pass and when peace prevails in the village, she will try her best to find out a person who is acceptable to both the parties. Otherwise this point of showing one's majority in the general meeting will go on by Ms. Mohra or Ms. Rama Devi and no constructive work will be done by the M.M. After sometime she plans to meet the Panchayat members and will try to patch up the matter between the Sarpanch, and Smt. Rama Devi and her supporters.

II. Significant Observations and Suggestions:

2.1 This M.M is an instance which exhibits how women are disuaded to express their views or act against the men in power. If at all any woman musters courage, these men use another woman as a pawn of the chess-board to kill her initiative and snub her free expression. The male dominated social set up expect women to be notional head of any institution and acted per their wishes, right or wrong.

2.2 If the M.M movement is to be encouraged it is very much desired that the authorities should go deep into the root causes of such conflicts and try their best to support the just cause and the just persons. They should ensure that dirty politics should not creep in, in this movement, which is yet to take its roots firmly in the village.

2.3 Women should be motivated to work and try to take constructive steps to strengthen the M.M movement instead of pitting against each other.

Mukheya Seveka and the Gram Seveka can play a vital role in this respect.

2.4 Due to this conflict between Smt. Rama Devi and Smt Mehra no constructive meetings could be conducted during the past many months. Steps may be taken so that both the women may reconcile between themselves instead of stretching the unpleasant points and showing their strenth in the general meeting of the M.M.

2.5 The amount of Rs.4600 collected from the members may be made use of for constructing an office room for the M.M. They should insist the village Panchayat for the land and request the State Government for the matching grants to construct the M.M Bhavan. Need of the time is that women in the village should unite instead of playing in the hands of men in power and ultimately harming their own common cause.

Awal

(Block Kalanaur, District Rohtak)

I. Introduction:

1.1 Awal is about 7 kilometer from the block headquarter at Kalanaur. It has 5 Aganwaries for the children in the age group 3-6 years. There are separate schools for boys and girls upto class tenth.

1.2 A Mahila Mandal was started in the village on adhoc basis on 21.2.87 but now it has been registered. (Registration No.2337 dated 1.10.88)

2. Composition of the Mahila Mandal:

2.1 There are 25 members in the existing M.M. Out of these 18 are Jat, 2 Brahmin, 2 Scheduled Caste and 3 Backward class. Smt. Raj Rani, a Punjabi, hard working, social women is the first elected Pradhan of this newly started M.M.

2.2 There are six other elected office bearers to share responsibilities of the M.M. with the Pradhan. Out of these six members, two are Punjabi, one

Khati (Backward class). ~~One Brahmin~~ and two Harijan. In this way the M.M. and its executive represents all castes in the village.

2.3 Among the 7 executive members 3 are illiterate. The other 4 can atleast write their names.

3. Analysis of the Activities of Mahila Mandal:

3.1 An analysis of the available records from 23.9.87 to 23.12.87 revealed that during the year 1987 (3 months approximately) 4 meeting of the M.M. were held and in ~~the year 1988 only six meetings~~ could be convened.

3.2 Main topics of discussion during these 10 meetings were utility and installation of smoke-less chullahas; enrolment of new members; cleanliness of homes; starting income generating projects; kitchen garden; growing fruit trees in the courtyards; family planning programme; small saving schemes; education for women; nutritious diet for children; and proper arrangement of things in the kitchen and home in general.

4. Observations and Suggestions:

4.1 The most striking feature of the visit to this M.M. was a brief conversation with an old handicapped women of about 70 years. She was busy in taking out cotton from the cotton seeds. She gets money in exchange for this labour from the cotton grower of the village. When asked why is she putting so much strain on herself when she is finding difficulty in sitting and is hardly able to see? Her immediate response was 'I do not want to be financially dependent on any one, for my daily food". "Are your children not taking care of you?". "They do, but one should try to be self-reliant so long one is able to do something through this physical form given by God".

"Who initiated you to this philosophy of life?" "Raj Rani" (Raj Rani is the M.M. pradhan. She was not present when this conversation took place)

4.1.1. It is creditable that M.M. is able to generate the philosophy of being self-reliant in the rural women. This agency has great potential to bring awareness among the women about their status, property rights and right to be treated fairly in the family and in the society at large.

4.2 Need for adult education was discussed twice (on 4.11.88 and 11.11.88) during the 10 meetings of the M.M held in the span of 16 months. More weightage may be given to this aspect by the M.M. In the M.M. itself 3 office bearers are totally illitorate and cannot write their names. Efforts need to be put in to motivate illiterate M.M. members and other women in the village to join Adult Education Programme to obtain functional literacy.

4.3 The scheme of Smoke-less Choolahas is popular in this village. The women make use of the same for cooking purpose. This may be taken as an indicator that women in this village are

not resistant to change. This already existing positive attitude can be further encashed for developing other desired values in them.

4.4 It is appreciable that the M.M. is a mix of all castes in the village and there is a harmonious relationship among the members. This harmony in the relationship is an indicator that woman can be brought together on a common platform for a common cause of improving quality of life of the rural women, irrespective of their caste and creed. The requisite input for achieving this object is the development of proper leadership among them.

4.5 The homes and the streets were comparatively cleaner in this village than many other villages in the area. This may be because some of the lanes are 'Pucca' in this village. It is felt that M.M. can play a vital role in the cleanliness drive which the state government plans to intensify in the near future.

Tehmurpur

(Block Kalanaur, District Rohtak)

1. Introduction

Tehmurpur is a small village, mostly inhabited by Punjabies. Majority of them are agriculturists. The land had been allotted to them long back at the time of the partition of the country in 1947. The majority of inhabitants, with their constant hard work in the past have been able to bring prosperity to the area. But the common complaint of the mothers is that the younger generation of teenagers is not that hardworking. Specially the boys waste most of their time in gossips and roaming about here and there. Most of them do not wish to stay in the village and want to settle down in the towns.

1.1 There is only one primary school in the village which has co-education. An Aganwari for the children in the age-group 3-6 years is also being run. As per records the Mahila Mandal wasstarted on 17.2.87. on adhoc basis. Later on it was got registered on 1.10.87 (Registration Numbers 2339)

2. Composition of the Mahila Mandal

There are 25 members in the existing Mahila Mandal (M.M). Out of these 20 are Punjabies, (Belonging to different castes) 3 Scheduled Castes and 2 belong to Backward Castes. Smt. Lajvanti, a sober, hospitable middle aged, sturdy, Punjabi women is the Pradhan. There are 7 other office bearers to share responsibilities with her. All the office bearers have been elected unanimously. Among the office bearers only one is a Harijan and the other 7 are Punjabi. Officially Smt. Lajvanti is the Pradhan but for all practical purposes . . Smt. Shanti Devi, the Up-pradhan holds the fort. She has inflated ego and considers herself the leader of the community. She openly claims that though she had been elected the Pradhan yet she suggested that Ms. Lajvanti may be accepted as the Pradhan, because due to bad health she will not be able to move around frequently in the village. But as Up-pradhan she will continue

to guide Smt. Lajvanti and the Mahila Mandal activities. Smt. Shanti Devi is perhaps the richest women in the village. She is around 60 years of age. She is well behaved, educated (upto Rattan which is equivalent to high school), extrovert, assertive and to a great extent emancipated women. She is issueless but had adopted a male child who is a grown up young man and is recently married. Smt. Shanti Devi has sufficient spare time at her disposal and has a say in the village. Her initiative and willing cooperation can be encashed to bring about desired changes in the village women.

3. <u>Analysis of the Mahila Mandal Activities</u>

Analysis of the records of the M.M from 17.2.87 to December 1988 revealed that during the year 1987 only 6 meetings and during 1988 14 meetings of the M.M were held.

3.1 Reasons for less number of meetings during the year 1987 may be twofolds. The M.M got

registration only on 1.1.87 and secondly it was at a take off stage during this span of time. During the year 1988 the number of meetings convened fulfil the set norms under the scheme.

3.2 Main points discussed during these 20 meetings were election of the office bearers; cleanliness of homes and surroundings; health care of children; nutritious diet for children; constituents of balanced diet; keeping drinking water at clean place; family planning; small saving schemes storing grains; concrete floors for washing utencils and taking bath; kitchen garden; growing trees in the village; care of clothes in winter and summer seasons.

registration only on 1.1.87 and secondly it was at a take off stage during this span of time. During the year 1988 the number of meetings convened fulfil the set norms under the scheme.

4. General Observations and Suggestions:

4.1 The M.M is of recent origin but has set its roots in the village milieu. The members understand the importance of collective bargaining to influence politicians and district administration. Most of them have positive self image and self confidence.

Main points discussed during these 20 meetings were election of the office bearers; cleanliness of homes and surroundings; health care of children; nutritious diet for children; constituents of balanced diet; keeping drinking water at clean place; family planning;

But the members have no vision of what can be achieved from the platform of Mahila Mandal. They need advice and guidance on this score and look towards Mukheya Seveka (M.S) and Gram Seveka (G.S) for this purpose.

4.2 The Gram Seveka talks about the same points on her visits to the village. The members have very well understood these points. If they are not able to practice the same, it is not that these are not clear to them but because they have some traditional social or economic constraints to follow the same. They expect Gram Seveka to suggest remedies to overcome these constraints and not the repetition of the expectations from them. G.S. in her own way is neither equipped academically or professionally to solve their problems nor has any financial or administrative powers to take decisions.

.3 The member are not happy with the working of Aganwari. They apprehend that the ration allotted for the children is not distributed among them fully. The incharge misuses the same. To overcome such complaints the state government is however empowering M.Ms to supervise the activities of Aganwaries and if there are any lacunas the same may be reported to the administration by them.

Kabulpur

(Block Kalanaur, District Rohtak)

1. Introduction:

1.1 Kabulpur is about 40 kilo meter from Kalanaur. There are 3 Aganwaries for the age-group 3-6 years and a separate school for girls upto 5th class. A co-educational school upto tenth class also exists in the village.

1.2 Nehru Yuvak Kendra has also opened its office in the village for the overall upliftment of the rural folk. Its impact is however not yet visible among the rural women. They are not aware of its activities.

1.3 Four Safai Karamcharies have been employed in the village under the recently initiated cleanliness of village scheme by the state government.

1.4 A duly registered Mahila Mandal (M.M) (Registration Number 2348 dt. 1.10.87) was started in the village on 9.10.87

2. Composition of the Mahila Mandal:

2.1 There are only 17 members of the M.M. at present. Out of these 13 are Jat, 2 Brahmin, 1 Scheduled Caste and 1 Backward Class. Ms. Rajpati is the elected Pradhan of the M.M. She is a young woman of about 35 years of age. Her husband is Patwari in the village. She is prestige conscious and feels shy to move about freely in the village. She thinks that being a young Jat 'Bahu' (daughter-in-law) of the village, the community will not think high of her if she will roam about in the village to mobilise women for some constructive works or for mutual upliftment. She herself however appears a talented person who knows tailoring and earns about Rs.300/- to Rs.400/- per month by sewing the clothes of the women.

2.2 Beside the Pradhan there are seven elected office bearers in the M.M. executive. They are all Jat and representation of the weaker communities is missing therein.

2.3 Except two all the office bearers including the M.M. Pradhan are illiterate.

3. Analysis of the activities of the Mahila Mandal:

3.1 An analysis of the activities of the Mahila Mandal from 9.10.87 to 4.1.89 revealed that during the 15 months only 5 meetings have been convened.

3.2 During these five meetings the discussions revolved around enrolment of new members, smoke-less Chullahas; proper arrangement of things in the homes to give a better look; importance of local festivals; preparation of certain eatables; small saving schemes; kitchen garden, storing grains, family planning programme; and keeping homes and surroundings clean.

Observations and Suggestions:

Very few meetings of the Mahila Mandal have been convened. This may be due to scanty supervisory staff at the block level and lack of required interest on the part of the Mahila Mandal Pradhan.

4.2 Most of the office bearers are illiterate and the question of education has not been discussed even once in the meetings conducted during 1987 and 1988. Mukhiya

Seveka should contact District Adult Education Officer for organising some functional literacy compaign for the members of the M.M. and other women in the village. The functional literacy of rural women and elementary education of girls should occupy an important place in the job chart of Mukheya Sevekas and Gram Sevekas.

4.3 Efforts need be made to enrol more members in Mahila Mandal. Some senior members of the existing Mahila Mandal should put in efforts in this direction.

4.3.1 The M.M. executive has no representation of the weaker sections of women. Intentional efforts need be made to involve them in the movement.

4.4 This M.M. has brought to surface an important point about the election of M.M. Pradhan. If a young women is elected as the Pradhan then she usually confronts many fold problems in activising the movement. Firstly being the Bahu (daughter-in-law) of the village she is not expected to move about freely in the village. Secondly she cannot sit on a cot on prestigious place when the

4.3.1 The M.M. executive has no representation of the weaker sections of women. Intentional efforts

women older to her are present in a gathering. Thirdly she cannot talk much before the women older to her and in most of the cases has to cover her head and observe 'Parda'. In this way social constraints stand in the way of young women taking a lead in mobilising this movement. If the Pradhan is very old then she has no energy and zest to carry forward the movement. Hence in most of the Mahila Mandals middle aged women have been elected as the M.M. Pradhans.

4.5 The Pradhan of this M.M. does not have much contact with the members. She does not even recognise them by their names though the number of M.M. members is only 17. Being a young women she has many social constraints mentioned in 4.4 above and as such does not appear as a suitable person who can head the M.M. movement successfully in the village.

4.6 In nutshell, it can be stated that the M.M. has not yet taken roots in the village soil. Great efforts will be required on the part of Mukhiya Seveka and the Gram Seveka to find out a suitable Pradhan and to popularise and vitalise the movement among the rural women.

Ritoli

(Block Kalanaur, District Rohtak)

1. Introduction:

1.1 The village Ritoli is about 38 Kilometer from Kalanaur. It has separate school for girls upto 10th class. Another school for boys upto 10th class is also being run. The village has three Aganwaries for the children in the age-group 3-6 years.

1.2 Under the recently started state government scheme 4 Safai Karamchari have been appointed to keep the village clean. Most of the lanes in the village are 'Pucca' (constructed with bricks) but so much mud has accumulated on the same that it is difficult to pass through these lanes. The village presents dirty look instead of the appointment of the Safai Karamcharies.

1.3 Most of the homes are kept unclean. It appears that the inhabitants have no sense of keeping the homes and the surroundings clean.

1.4 It is stated that almost half the homes in the village own television sets. Women are fond of viewing the programmes relayed on the national net work.

1.5 A Mahila Mandal (M.M.) was started in the village on 8.10.87 after it got registered on 1.10.87 (Registration number 2347).

2. Composition of the Mahila Mandal:

2.1 Smt. Jeewni, a Brahmin, is the elected Pradhan of the M.M. It has 26 members at present. ~~Out of these~~ 18 are Jat, 5 Brahmin, 2 Scheduled Caste and 1 Backward Caste. In this way it is a mix of all castes.

2.2 There are 7 other elected office bearers. They are all Jat. Except one the other office bearers are illiterate. Even the Pradhan can write only her name and as such can be termed as an illiterate person.

2.3 The Pradhan is about 35 years of age. She is a widow, who has reared up 3 sons and one daughter by running a retail gener shop in her home. Her daughter helps her in running the shop while her elde

son (about 18 years) swindles away her earnings instead of contributing to the family income. The second son is running a tailor's shop in the village but is not contributing anything to the family income. In this way she is an unhappy woman who is finding difficulty in managing her family affairs. Consequently she is not able to take interest in the activities of the M.M. She herself needs the help of the other persons to set her home in order.

3. Activities of the Mahila Mandal:

3.1 After the analysis of the records of the M.M. from 8.19.87 to 5.1.89 it was found that only 7 meetings have been conducted during the past 16 months.

3.2 The discussions during these meetings revolved around aims of M.M; Smoke-less Choolahas; small saving schemes; need for keeping homes clean; care of clothes; storage of grains; kitchen garden; balanced diet; and 'Keertan'.

4. Observations and Suggestions:

4.1 The M.M. has not taken firm roots in the village so far. It is being run for name sake in the village.

The enthusiasm to uplift women through this agency is missing. The Pradhan has not been able to take interest in activising the activities of the M.M. She has her own family problems. It is suggested that some other women may be elected as the Pradhan who may devote more time and energy to the M.M. activities. Pradhan plays an important role in mobilising the women for mutual upliftment. Hence the Mukheya Seveka (M.S.) should ensure tactfully that the names of only capable women are proposed for the election of the M.M. Pradhan.

4.2 A sense of cleanliness is missing in the rural women. They do not keep their homes clean and even throw the garbage outside in front of their homes. Efforts need be made to convince M.M. members about the desirability of keeping the surroundings clean. Village Panchayat should levy penality on the persons who throw garbage outside in the lanes. Dustbins may be provided by the Panchayat at convenient places to enable people to throw the garbage there. The concept of keeping dustbins in homes need also be popularised by the Gram Seveka (G.S.).

4.3 Almost all the M.M. members are illiterate. But the question of education has never been discussed by the G.S. in the M.M. meetings even once. This indicates that education has been given a very low priority in this M.M. There is need for advocating and planning functional literacy programme(s) for these women. The M.S. should contact the District Adult Education Officer for this purpose.

4.4 There is no representation of weaker sections in the M.M. executive. Next time when elections are held, the M.S. should encourage them for their representation.

4.5 Very few meetings of the M.M. have been held since its inception. The official explanation is that due to scanty staff it is not possible for the M.S. or G.S. to visit all the M.Ms. frequently.

4.6 On the whole this M.M. is on a very weak footings. The supervisory staff should pay special attention to bring it at par with other good M.Ms. in the block.

Azad Nagar

(Block Matanhale, District Rohtak)

1. An Overview:

1.1 Azad Nagar is the model village of the district. It is about 42 Km. from Rohtak and about 7 Km. from Matanhale which is its block headquarter. The village is inhabited by 85 Harijan and 1 Jat households. A spacious building was constructed in the year 1973 to provide space for a primary health centre, a primary school, Mahila Mandal and Industrial Training Centre. Main source of income of the villagers is the cultivation of land allotted to them by the state government in 1973.

1.2 There is no provision of any Aganwari in the village. The primary school is co -educational. For further studies the children have to go to Chuckwas which is about 2.5 Km. from the village. An adult education centre is being run in the village under the supervision of Nehru Yuvak Kendra. Ms. Salochna a Harijan women who has studied upto ninth class is running the Centre

since October 1988. The response of the women is quite encouraging to the adult literacy compaign.

1.3 In Feb. 1989 a diploma course in making leather goods was being conducted by Shri Pritam Singh, a Jat young man who is an employee of the state government as a Foreman. The training is imparted for 6 months and there is a provision of stipend of Rs.100 per month for the trainees who come beyond a distance of 4 Km. The learning material is provided by the state government and the finished products are sold to the villagers at no loss, no profit basis. These items are disposed off in no time as only the cost of the material is charged.

1.3.1 After the completion of this training the persons get job as cobler in police, Transport Corporations, leather concerns and can start their own shops also. Sixteen boys were under training in February 1989. There was not a single girl trainee in that course.

1.4 A registered M.M. (No.152) was started in the village on 24.7.80. At present it has 25 persons on its rolls. All of them are Harijan. Smt. Sarti Devi, a Harijan, aged women is the elected Pradhan of the M.M. She is the mother of the ex-Sarpanch of the village. There are 7 other elected members in the M.M. executive. All are Harijan and illiterate. Their main source of income is the cultivation of agricultural land.

1.5 Smt. Geeta Devi, a handicapped women is the G.S. for this M.M. The post of M.S. is yet to be filled up by the administration.

1.6 Analysis of the records of the M.M. reveals that main items of discussion in the meetings of the M.M. were the same as narrated under the situational studies of the M.M. at Chuckwas and Matanhale. (These M.Ms. are also located in the Matanhale block like Azad Nagar).

2. <u>Observations and Suggestions:</u>

2.1 It is appreciable that Nehru Yuvak Kendra has opened an Adult Literacy Centre for the village women.

The instructor is also taking great pains to motivate women to come to the centre regularly. It is suggested that these efforts should be continued till the women attain functional literacy level.

2.2 It was surprising to note that not a single girl has come forward to join the leather training course being run in the village for the last 5 months. The parents and the girls should be motivated by the G.S. and the M.M. Pradhan to come out of their narrow shells and try their hands on non-traditional skills. The training instructors should also put in special efforts to motivate local community to send their daughters to such training courses. At present, they rather discourage them to join the same.

2.3 The members are happy that they have been provided a spacious room in the main building complex to hold their meetings and keep records and other articles. The provision of a separate space develops feelings of belongingness in them to the M.M. movement.

2.3.1 It is suggested that some good visuals conveying meaningful messages to the illiterate village population may be painted or hung in the room and outside the M.M. Bhavan. The blank walls of the room and the outside area do not present a lively atmosphere.

2.3.2 Public Relation Officer may be requested by the field staff to make arrangement for the exhibition of some meaningful video films off and on for the benefit of the village folk. These are the areas which need their exhibition the most.

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Chuckwas

(Block Matanhale, District Rohtak)

1. An Overview:

1.1 The old name of Chuckwas was Islamgarh. It is about 55 Km. from Rohtak, its district headquarter and abou 2 Km. from Matanhale which is its block headquarter. This village is mostly inhabited by 'Raos' (Ahirs). The village presents a clean look.

1.2 There is no Aganwari in the village. It has a high school which is co-educational. The teaching staff in the school is a mixed group of males and females.

1.3 A registered M.M. (No.821) was started in the village on 17.3.81. Smt. Ram Kaur is the elected Pradhan of the M.M. She is now too old to head the institution. She is the wife of an ex-Sarpanch of the village. She is a rich, weak, sober, shy and illiterate women. It is difficult to guess that what would have been the criteria of electing her as the Pradhan of this M.M. Possibly the reflected glory of her husband being the then Sarpanch of the village may have motivated the

members to elect her as the Pradhan.

1.3.1 There are 9 other elected office bearers in the M.M. executive. The executive is a mixed group of Ahirs and Harijans. All of them are illiterate. At present there are 22 regular members on the rolls of the M.M. There are 9 other women who casually attend the meetings. Out of these 22 members, 17 are Ahir, 3 Scheduled Caste and 2 belong to backward class. Almost all are illiterate.

1.4 The records of the M.M. were analysed for the period 8.9.88 to 6.2.89. It was found that during the last 11 months, 19 meetings of the M.M. were convened. During these meetings the discussions revolved around the importance of nutritious diet; smoke-less Chullahas; craft work; kitchen garden; care of children; family planning programme; small saving scheme; care of woollen clothes; storing grains; need for keeping home and surroundings clean; importance of adult education (3.3.88); immunisation of children and pregnant women; use of dustbins; and preparation of various food items.

2. Observations and Suggestions:

2.1 In Ahir community of the village much attention is still not paid to the education of girls. They have a feeling that after being educated they do not listen to the elders and do not give any importance to their views. Moreover it becomes a problem to search a suitable match for them thereafter.

2.1.1. All possible ways may be adopted by the field staff to explode this myth. Villagers should be helped to get rid of this wrong notion. They should be explained that education enlightens the minds and broadens mental horizon of the children. It enables them to take their own decisions which are based on logic. The parents should rather welcome such changes in the behaviour pattern of their daughters instead of getting scared of providing them opportunities for education.

2.1.2. Adult literacy compaign may be given a boost in the village to educate the rural women. This step may help them to understand the value of education and get

rid of the biases which they often hold against the education of girls.

2.1.3. The field staff and the M.M. Pradhan should take up and pursue the question of opening Aganwari in the village. This will go a long way in the proper health care of the small children (3-6 years) and they will learn to be disciplined from the initial years of their childhood.

2.2 If the movement of M.M. is to be popularised at the grass-root level then it is essential that the Pradhan should be selected very carefully. She should be energetic and have devotion and zeal to do something for the upliftment of women. The present Pradhan does not fulfil these criteria.

2.2.1 It has been observed that for years together the same women continues as the M.M. Pradhan. It is not fair. The election of the Pradhan should be held after every two years so that different women may get the chance to hold this responsible job and show their worth.

2.2.2. It is appreciable that the M.M. executive has fair representation of weaker sections of the society. This recognition ensures their better involvement and participation in the movement.

2.3 The members badly feel the necessity of some place where they may hold their meetings peacefully and keep the records of the M.M. This is a common demand of the M.M. District authorities should take up this matter with the village Panchayats to find out some viable solution.

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Matanhale

(Block Matanhale, District Rohtak)

1. An Overview:

1.1 The village Matanhale is about 56 Km. from Rohtak, which is its district headquarter and about 2 km. from the block headquarter at Matanhale. The village is mainly inhabited by Jats. Most of the lanes are 'Pucca' but much mud has gathered on the same. So the village does not present a clean look to an outsider who visits it.

1.2 There is no Aganwari in the village. The village has good educational facilities. There are separate primary and high schools for boys as well as girls. The teaching staff posted in the schools is punctual, regular and efficient.

1.3 A registered M.M. (No.690) was started in the village on 5.2.81. At present there are 39 members on its rolls. Out of these 30 are Jat, 1 Brahmin, 3 Scheduled Caste and 4 belong to Backward class.

1.3.1 An old (about 70 years) Jat women is the elected Pradhan of the M.M. There are 9 other elected office bearers in the M.M. executive. All of them are Jat. None of the office bearer is educated.

1.4 Analysis of the records of the M.M. for the period 31.1.85 to 7.2.89 revealed that during the last 49 months, 49 meetings were convened. The main points discussed during these meetings were importance of keeping homes and surroundings clean; desireability of paying respect to elders and love to youngesters in the family and the community; care of woollen clothes; storing grains; smoke-less Chullahas; Keertan; family planning programme; small saving schemes; need for proper ventilation and sanitation in the homes; use of dustbins; kitchen garden; 'Pacca' floor for taking bath and washing utensils; need for starting income generating projects; preparation of pickles and other food items; knitting, sewing and other craft works; need for M.M. Bhavan; importance of national festivals; growing fruit trees;

2. Observations and Suggestions:

2.1 The most significant observation of this M.M. was the effective role played by the M.M. Pradhan in the life of the village folk. The contribution of the Pradhan are briefly narrated in the following paragr

2.1.1. Smt. Lakshmi an old, lively, social, intelligent worldly-wise, Jat women is the elected Pradhan of th M.M. since its inception. She is very popular among the rural folk and is virtually loved by one and all. The women depend on the 'Dadi' for her advise, whenever any problem crops up in their life. She is equally friendly to the daughters, daughter-in-laws and mother-in-laws of the village. Even menfolk pay her due respect. Her house is just like a village 'Chopal' for women. The women, whenever free go to her house to gossip, to discuss serious problem and sometimes sleep there at night if they have any "Man Mutab" (annoyance) with any family members. The Dadi pointed out that this temporary separation of a member avoids many unpleasant situations in the

families. She is a 'Dai' by profession. Her profession has/had given her free entry to most of the homes in the village. If any man misbehaves with his wife, mother or children then her usual way of expression to make her decision bindin, on him and the family is "Are Chorra, Mera Paida Keeya, Mera Samne Jaban Challata Hai" (Oh Man, I am responsible for bringing you on earth and how dare you to question my decision. I am a better judge). She is the 'Dadi' of the village in the real sense of the word.

2.1.2 Dadi believes that all girls should go to school. When 'Sarkar' (Government) has given the facilities then why should not the girls avail it. She feels that girls should be given some technical training which may enable them to stand on their legs. She is a staunch believer that girls should be economically self reliant and bold to face all problems. She proudly narrates her own life history and says that her late husband had been 'Hawaldar' in the army. Through out her life she has lived almost alone

and taken care of the home and the land. Once anyone (man or women) takes the responsibility then automatically 'Himat' (courage) comes one's way.

2.1.3. The personality and capability of such type of M.M. Pradhans can be made use of by the field staff in inculcating many desired values about the equality of sexes and empowerment of women at the grass root level. But the fact of the situation is that the field staff themselves is not aware of those values and needs. Hence there is an urgent need to organise orientation courses for the G.Ss. and M.Ss. to equip them to convey proper messages to the rural women.

2.2 The members feel that M.M. should be provided some place for conducting their meetings. They should have some office where they may entertain the complaints, problems of the women, and keep records of the follow up work carried on with the authorities.

.3 M.M. executive should have the representation of the weaker sections also. This step will develop confidence in them to shoulder responsibilities.

2.4 The members feel that for keeping the village surroundings clean, the M.M. executive should be given power to fine those households who throw their garbage in the village lanes. The fine thus collected may be utilised for the welfare activities for the village. The M.M. executive should also be empowered to fine those parents who donot send their daughters to school or withdraw them before he completion of elementary stage.

2.5 The records of the M.M. meetings should be maintained more systematically by the G.S. The date of holding the meeting should be invariably mentioned.

2.6 Most of the M.M. members and all the office bearers are illiterate. District Adult Education Officer may be contacted by L.C.S. or M.S. to initiate intensive adult literacy compaign in this village to provide facilities and opportunity to women for educating themselves.

The members were keen that government should organise and finance some educational tours of the M.M. members. It is suggested that these tours should be organised to give exposure to the rural women.

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MADINA

(Block Meham, District Rohtak)

1. Introduction:

1.1 Madina falls in Meham Block which is the constituency of Shri Devi Lal, the present Chief Minister of Haryana. It is about 16 kilo meter from the district headquarter and about 35 kilo meter from the block headquarter.

1.2 Shri Anand Singh, Chairman of the Subordinate Selection Board also belongs to this village and the Members of the M.M. feel pride in disclosing this information. They say that the Chairman feels concerned about the upliftment of the villagers and tries his best to get maximum number of their children employed in government jobs.

1.3 The village has separate schools for boys and girls upto class teth. In this way the state has provided facilities for the education of girls. Now it is upto them to make use of the same.

1.4 The village has two Panchayats. Hence two M.Ms. have been formed with separate infrastructures.

1.5 The members of the M.Ms. are a politically aware group and are conscious of their rights.

II. Composition of the Mahila Mandals:

Details of the composition of the two M.Ms. are given below:

(i) Madina Gidran

It has 22 members on its rolls. Out of these 17 are Jat, 2 Brahmin, 1 Scheduled Caste and 2 belong to Backward Caste. Smt. Shanti Devi is the Pradhan of the M.M. She is a Punjabi, aged (about 58 years), affectionate, social and humble women. She is a trained 'Dai' by profession. The women have great faith and respect for her words. Since the inception of the M.M. she is the elected Pradhan. The members feel that they cannot find a better person than her who can plead their cause more forcefully.

(ii) There are 7 other members to support the Pradhan in the M.M. activities. Out of these 4 are Jat, one each Kumhar, Scheduled Caste and Punjabi. In the M.M. executive of 8 members 3 are educated upto primary level and the rest are illiterate.

2. Madina Korsan

2.1 The M.M. has 20 members on its rolls. Out of these 17 are Jat, 1 Scheduled Caste and 2 Backward Class. Smt. Mamo Devi, a Jat, illiterate, middle aged women is the elected Pradhan of the M.M. There are 7 other elected women in M.M. executive to work with her. Five of them are Jat and 2 are Baniya by caste. Except the 'Sachiv' who is educated upto middle class all other office bearers are illiterate.

III. Analysis of the Activities of the Mahila Mandals:

1. Madina Gidran

1.1 Records of the M.M. were analysed from 16.10.84 to 9.1.89. It was found that 83 meetings were held during this period. The range of the frequency of the meetings was 7 to 22 per year during this period. Shortage of supervisory staff appears the main reason for the less number of meetings conducted during this span.

1.2 Main aspects discussed during the meetings were smoke-less chullahas; Keertan; use of green vegetables; preparation of eatables; family planning, small saving

schemes; use of dustbins; cleanliness of homes and surroundings; excursions; election of office bearers; storing grains; nutritious diet for children; Kitchen garden; growing fruit trees; starting economic project; and admission of small children to Aganwaries.

2. Madina Korsan

Records of the M.M. from 9.7.84 to 9.1.89 were analysed and it was found that only 56 meetings of the M.M. were conducted during this period. The number of the meetings ranged between 3 to 18 per annum. Shortage of sufficient supervisory staff is given the main reason for such a low frequency of the meetings of the M.M.

3. During the meetings the discussions revolved around growing fruit trees; Keertan; starting economic projects; family planning; smoke-less chullahas; small saving schemes; preparation of pickles and other eatables; use of dustbins; use of green vegetables; election of office bearers; nutritious diet for children; kitchen garden; storing grains and keeping homes and surroundings clean.

IV **Observations and Suggestions:**

Observations and suggestions about the two M.Ms. are given in the following paragraphs:

1. Madina Gidran

1.1 It is appreciable that a Punjabi women is the M.M. Pradhan in this Jat dominated, politically aware, caste ridden village. The women are emanicipated to the extent to give more weightage to the competence than to the caste prejudices in selecting their leader. Not only the Pradhan but the elected executive of the M.M. has a fair representation of all the communities. If the same trend of thinking could be further strengthened in the village women and implemented at Panchayat and state assembly elections, the M.M. could set a precedent and role model for the block rather the district as a whole.

1.2 It is a politically aware group but they are not aware as to how they can assert their rights and put pressure on the Panchayat to give them facilities for conducting their activities smoothly and effectively. As they are mentally alert, so a little orientation can empower

them and much can be achieved through them at the grass-root level.

1.3 The supervisory staff posted in this M.M. does not appear very effective. They have spent most of their time in conducting 'Keertan' and their second emphasis had been on family planning and small savings, whereas this time could be better utilised for more fruitful works.

1.3.1. Education of small children was discussed only twice during the span of 5 years (4.6.88 and 9.6.88). Though most of the members are illiterate yet the question of adult education has never been discussed by G.S. Neither she ever cared to contact the concerned officer for this purpose.

3.2. The members are keenly interested in starting any productive project for the betterment of their economic status. The G.S. discussed about this aspect twice or thrice but nothing concrete has been done so far. There is a strong need for action oriented discussions in the M.M. meetings and not mere talks on the part of the supervisory staff.

1.4 Taking into view the profession and the popularity of the M.M. Pradhan, 22 is too less a number of the members of the M.M. G.S. should have motivated the Pradhan to spread the movement in a wider circle of the village women. The movement has taken its roots in the village soil, due to the personality of the Pradhan, but it requires better spread.

1.5 One gathers an impression that the supervisory staff is not properly equipped with knowledge, effective communication skills, interest and commitment to strengthen the movement in this village. Posting of G.S. or M.S. with matching potential of the members of the M.M. is the need of the area.

2. Madina Korsan

2.1 Most of the time of the M.M. meetings has been spent on conducting 'Keertan' and family planning activities. These meetings could be better utilised in helping women to analyse their problems and finding out solutions. The objectives of starting the M.Ms. have been side tracked and emphasis have been laid on other aspects.

2.1.1. Though most of the members are illiterate yet education has not been discussed in the meetings. The members are interested in starting some productive project but that aspect has not been taken care of in the meetings. The meetings should be organised to fulfil needs of the members and not for simply showing these on official records.

2.1.2 After going through the records of the meetings. one gathers an impression that the G.S. or M.S. had not done much for the economic betterment or social upliftment of the members. They should be oriented to feel more committed to the qualitative spread of the movement in the area.

2.2 Twenty is too small a number of M.M. members for such a politically aware big village. The Pradhan should make efforts to bring more women to the fold of the movement.

2.3 The M.M. executive should also have representation of weaker sections to procure their active involvement. They should not have an impression that this is a higher caste dominated movement.

2.4 The two M.Ms. have the same supervisory staff. So the suggestions given for M.M. at Gidran will apply to the M.M. also. Hence the same are not being mentioned again to avoid repetition but the supervisory staff should take care of the same to strengthen the movement in this area.

V. Concluding Remarks:

These M.Ms. have great potential to work for social and economic upliftment by self and mutual efforts. But they have not been able to get proper guidance and direction to tread the desired path. The B.D.O. and L.C.S. should make special efforts to bring them in contact with the specific developmental agencies who may help them in social empowerment and economic betterment.

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Mokhra

(Block Meham, District Rohtak, Haryana)

1. Introduction:

Mokhra is about 23 kilo meter from Meham, the block headquarter. It has three Panchayats so three Mahila Mandals are being run in the area. Those are known as Mokhra Rose, Mokhra Kheri and Mokhra Khas. The village has separate high schools for girls and boys. In Mokhra Rose there is one Aganwari and in Mokhra Kheri and Mokhra Khas there are two Aganwaries in each of the villages. All the three M.Ms are not situated on the main road.

2. Composition of the Mahila Mandals:

The compositions of the 3 Mahila Mandals are briefly narrated below:

2.1 Mokhra Rose

A young Jat woman named Nirmla Devi is the elected Pradhan of the M.M. She is educated upto middle standard and is the wife of the village Sarpanch. There are 7 other elected members to share her responsibilities. Five of them are Jat, one backward and one Scheduled Caste. Out of these seven members, one has studied upto primary level and another upto middle level. The remaining 5 are illiterate.

It has 25 members on its rolls. Twenty three of them are Jat, 1 Scheduled Caste and 2 Backward Caste.

2.2 Mokhra Kheri

The Mahila Mandal is being headed by Ms. Savitri Davi, a middle aged, Brahmin woman. There are 7 other elected office bearers. Three of them are Jat and one each is Rajput, Brahmin, Harijan and of Backward Caste. In this way there is a fair representation of all the castes in the executive. Except the Harijan members all other including the Pradhan are illiterate. At present there are 25 members on the rolls of the M.M. Fifteen are Jat, 6 Brahmin, 1 Scheduled and 3 Backward Castes.

2.3 Mokhra Khas

It has 30 members on its rolls. Twenty are Jat, 4 Brahmin, 2 Scheduled Caste and 4 Backward Caste. Ms. Shakuntla Devi an aged Brahmin woman who is illiterate is the elected Pradhan of the

M.M. Out of the other 7 elected members of the executive 5 are Jat and 2 are Brahmin . There is no representation of backward or scheduled castes. All the office bearers are illiterate.

3. Analysis of the Activities of the Mahila Mandal

3.1 Mokhra Rose

3.1.1 An analysis of the records of the M.M. in Mokhra Rose from 2.3.84 to 9.1.89 revealed that 46 meetings were held during this period as per details given below:

Year	No. of Meetings	Remarks
1984	28	
1985	22	
1986	16	i. Lack of interest on the part of G.S. and shortage of staff at the block level was responsible for less number of meetings.
1987	4	
1988	6	ii. The G.S. (now promoted as M.S.) is scheduled caste. She feels less at home with the members who are mostly Jat.

3.1.2 Main aspects discussed during these meetings were Keertan; smoke-less Chullahas; kitchen garden preparation of pickles and other eatables; family planning; small saving schemes; nutritious diet for children; care of clothes; storing grains; and balanced diet.

3.2 Mokhra Kheri

3.2.1 An analysis of the records of the M.M. in Mokhra Kheri from 8.1.87 to 9.1.89 was made. It revealed that 22 meetings were held during the span of 25 months.

3.2.2 During these meetings the main points discussed were election of the office bearers; small saving scheme; opening of craft centre in the village; nutritious diet for children; Keertan; storing grains; family planning; kitchen garden; smokeless chullahas; and admitting children to school.

3.3 Mokhra Khas

3.3.1 Records of the M.M. at Mokhra Khas were available from 1.3.80 to 18.10.84 and 6.6.88 to 9.1.89. During these periods 76 meetings were held as per details given below:

Year	No. of Meetings	Remarks
1980	19	It was stated by the B.D.O. that lack of supervisory staff is the main cause for less number of meetings in this village.
1981	5	
1982	3	
1983	16	
1984	25	
Total	68	
1988	7	
1989	1	
G.Total	76	

3.3.2 During the meeting the discussion revolved around election of office bearers; family planning; cleanliness of homes, lanes and surroundings; education of children and adults; religious Kathas; arrangement of things to present better look to the homes; growing vegetables, fruits and flowers; use of old clothes; Keertan; precaution from Malaria;

storing grains; immunization of children; small saving schemes; use of dustbins; Pucca place for washing utensils and taking baths; and preparation of food items, pickles.

4. Observations and Suggestions:

Observations and suggestions about each of the three M.Ms. are given below separately.

4.1 Mokhra Rose

4.1.1 The Pradhan appears a shy introvert person. Being a young 'Bahu' of the village, she feels hesitent to contact the members frequently and personally. As such she has not been able to put life in the movement. She is very much conscious of his social position of being the wife of the village Surpanch and has not done much to vitalise the M.M.

4.1.2 Most of the members are illiterate but the question of education has not been discussed during the meetings. Most common items of the meetings had been discussion about family planning, preparation of eatables or

organisation of 'Keertan'. Education should get due share during these meetings.

4.1.3 It appears that Mukheya Seveka (M.S.) had been vigilent and conscious of her supervisory duties. When she found Gram Seveka absent on duty on 2.1.85 she called for her explanation for being absent and not holding meetings during her visits.

4.1.4 Records of the meetings of the Mahila Mandal are not maintained properly by the Gram Seveka. Most of the times no date has been mentioned and space for the signatures of the Pradhan or other office bearers are left unsigned. These things give an impression that the records have been prepared while sitting at home without actual visits.

This M.M. is not on the main road. Hence it is not accessible by frequent bus service. Perhaps this may be the reason that even Mukheya Seveka (M.S.) could visit it only once (on 2.1.85) during the year 1985 and 1986.

It is suggested that conveyance facility may be provided to the M.Ss. in practice and not simply on paper for thorough supervision of the M.Ms. situated in far flung areas. In reality these are the areas which need frequent visits and constant guidance but are neglected due to lack of government conveyance at the disposal of the M.Ss.

4.1.5 A Mahila Mandal Bhavan has been constructed in this village. But it was shocking to know that this is being used by the Patwaries for living purpose and no activity of the M.M. has ever been conducted in this Bhavan. Doubally surprising was that this irregularity has not been brought to the notice of the higher authorities by the M.M. Pradhan or its members or even the Gram Seveka and the Mukheya Seveka. This misuse of the M.M. Bhavan may be locked into by the concerned B.D.O. and the persons responsible for this irregularity may be taken to task.

4.2 Mokhna Kheri

4.2.1 The striking feature of this M.M. is that its executive has balanced representation of all the castes. The involvement of all communities is necessary for pushing the M.M. movement forward at a rapid speed. It was even heartening to note that the M.M. Pradhan is a Brahmin in a Jat dominated village. This can be taken as an indicator of harmonious relationship among the different castes. The members have given preference to the competency rather than to the caste while electing the M.M. Pradhan. This attitude deserves appreciation.

4.2.2 Though all the office bearers except the Secretary (who is Scheduled Caste) are illiterate yet the question of education has been discussed only once (on 7.5.88) during the M.M. meetings. It is suggested that the Mukheya Seveka should contact the District Adult Education Officer and request

him to initiate Adult Education and Non-formal Education Centre in the village for their benefit.

4.2.3 It was pleasing to note that the Secretary who is a scheduled caste is an educated women. This type of instances set role models for other women in the community and develop confidence in them for upward mobility. Intentional efforts need be made by the G.S. and the M.S. to bring such women to limelight. Because they can be made instrumental in motivating girls in the weaker sections to enroll and stay in the schools till the completion of atleast elementary stage.

4.2.4 The M.M. can be further activised if the supervisory staff may take more interest in its activities. The M.M. Pradhan is very active and even the members are keenly interested in the economic upliftment of the women. If some credit agency may give them guidance and infrastructural facilities they are capable of running any economic project successfully.

4.3 Mokhra Khas

4.3.1 It was discouraging to note that no members in the M.M. executive is educated. They (except one) can not even sign their name. Still the question of education was discussed only once (on 5.5.84) during the span of six years. It is suggested that the supervisory staff should discuss the matter with the District Adult and Non-formal Education officer and explore the possibility of starting a centre in the village for this purpose.

4.3.2 Most of the time of the M.M. was spent in conducting Keertan, Katha and Satsang (Religious activities). Sometimes (3.8.80) even men of the village participated in the Keertan. Most of the time these activities had been organised when some happy incident had occured in the home of any resident of the village. These activities have been instrumental in developing community feelings in the villagers and they try to come to the help of each other at the time of need.

4.3.3. The community gatherings mentioned in the previous paragraph can be further utilised for developing positive feelings towards women, among men and creating a favourable environment for developing desired qualities for equality of sexes and empowerment of women. But to achieve this goal the supervisory staff requires proper orientation and training.

4.3.4 There is no representation of weaker sections in M.M. executive. G.S. and M.S. should make intentional efforts to ensure their active involvement.

4.3.5 It is appreciable that members are aware of their rights. When they felt that the Pradhan and the Secretary are not taking interest in the M.M. activities, they boldly expressed their concern (on 21.6.84) and put up a resolution before the G.S. requesting her to hold fresh elections and change them. When they found (on 6.9.84)

that treasurer is not working properly they elected another treasurer (Ms. Khajani) in her place. These incidents may be taken as an indicator that the M.M. movement is taking roots in the village.

4.3.6 The members are very keen to take up some economic project which may help them to be self-employed. But they donot have funds. M.S. should contact some local banking agencies which may provide them an easy access to credit and infrastructural facilities along with managerial and marketing skills.

4.3.7 This M.M. has great unexploited potential which can be utilised profitably for social, educational and economic upliftment of the women of the area.

KABLANA

(Block Jhajjar, District Rohtak)

1. Introduction:

1.1 The Village Kablana is about 47 kilo meter from the district headquarter and about 12 kilo Meter from Jhajjar, the block headquarter. It has a separate primary school for the girls and a co-educational school upto tenth class. There are 3 Aganwaries for the children in age-group 3-6 years.

1.2 The Scheme of smokeless Chullahas has been initiated in the village and at present 100 such ovens are being used by the villagers. It was stated that about 50 families did not find it useful and have broken the same.

1.3 The village has been covered under the newly introducted 'Cleanliness Drive Scheme' and two women sweapers have been appointed under it. M.Ms. have been made responsible to get work from them. The village gives a clean look.

1.4 The Chairman of the block (Sh. Om Prakash) also belongs to this village and takes keen interest in the upliftment of the villagers from all angles. But the M.M. and the Chairman are working in isolation.

1.5 This is one of the oldest M.M. in the block. It was started sometimes in the year 1959, but it was got registered on 11.9.78 (No.336)only.

2. Composition of the Mahila Mandal:

2.1 The M.M. has 41 members on its rolls. Out of these 15 are Jat, 6 Brahmin, 10 Scheduled Caste and 10 belong to Backward Class. Smt. Shravana is the elected Pradhan. She is an aged (66 years old), illiterate, active, affectionate, hospitable, liberal, social, rich, humble, Jat women, who commands love and respect among women. Six of her seven children are educated (Eldest was daughter who remained illiterate) and all the seven are well settled economically.

2.2 There are 7 other elected members in the M.M. executive. Out of these 4 are Jat, 1 Brahmin and 2 are Scheduled Caste. Except one members the other 6 are illiterate.

3. Activities of the Mahila Maldal:

3.1 An analysis of the records of the M.M. was made from 20.2.83 to 16.1.89. It was found that 136 meetings have been organised during this period by the supervisory staff. The details of the same are given below:

S.No.	Year	No. of Meetings	Remarks
1.	1983	18	i. As per rules of the scheme G.S. or M.S. is required to conduct at least 2 meetings in a month.
2.	1984	25	
3.	1985	30	
4.	1986	14	
5.	1987	19	
6.	1988	27	ii. There is no M.S. posted for this block. G.S. is the incharge of the M.Ms. in this block.
7.	1989	3	iii. The period covered is only January 1989.
	Total	136	

3.2 The record reveals that the discussions in the meetings revolved around celebration of national festivals; sewing and embroidery works; storing grains; growing vegetables and fruit trees; study tour; nutritious diet; care and way of washing woollen and cotton clothes; health care of children; keeping home and surroundings clean; preparation of pickles; family planning cases; smokeless chullahas; Keertan; use of dustbins; small savings; immunisation of children; and admission of children to school.

3.2.1 The emphasis in the meetings had been mostly on growing vegetables and bringing family planning cases.

4. <u>Observations and Suggestions:</u>

4.1 It was a pleasing experience to meet the M.M. members and the Pradhan. The members though aged but are lively, pleasant and optimistic. It was felt that personality traits of the M.M. Pradhan play a

vital role in the success of the M.M. movement in a village. The Pradhan, though very rich yet is so humble that members feel free to come to her home to hold meetings. There is no hesitency and they consider her as one of them.

It is suggested that G.S. and M.S. should learn a lesson from the Pradhan and take special care when the election of the M.M. Pradhan is held in any M.M. They should indirectly intervene to ensure that right type of women are elected for the other M.Ms. in the Block.

4.2 There is shortage of supervisory staff in the block. The post of M.S. is lying vacant. It is difficult for the G.S. to do justice to the 21 M.Ms. in the block.

4.2.1 Records of the meetings have not been properly maintained. Many pages of the register are left blank in between by simply mentioning dates of the

meetings. (For example pages between 2.7.83 and 3.10.83; 22.3.84 and 12.7.84 etc. are left blank). From this one gathers an impression that either the G.S. has not completed the record or has not conducted the meetings at all and has simply shown her visits on the official records while sitting at home.

4.2.2 - Taking a clue from the above facts it is suggested that unless the Lady Circle Supervisor (L.C.S.) is provided a Jeep the effective supervision of the G.S. or M.S. will not be possible and the field staff will continue to neglect their duties at the cost of the public exchequer . In nutshell it may be said that it is a bad economy not to provide a government vehicle to the L.C.S.

4.3 Though most of the women are illiterate yet education has been assigned practically no importance during the meetings. It was discussed

only once (on 18.4.88) during the span of 6 years. Education should get its due share and efforts in the direction of adult literacy may be intensified.

4.4 The scheme of smoke-less chullahas has been introduced but it requires proper follow up. The causes of about 50 families not making use of the installed chullahas need to be diagonosed. They may be either convinced of their utility or the difficulties faced by them in their use may be looked into seriously. The temptation to follow the mad race for achieving set targets of any scheme may be resisted by the field staff. The emphasis should shift to providing genuine facilities to the women folk in their day-to-day work and not simply achieving targets.

4.5 There is no co-ordination between the activities of the block Chairman and the M.M. The G.S.

should make efforts to bring them closer and ensure that something concrete is done for the social and economic upliftment of the rural women. Mere repetition of the same things in the meetings, apparently bore the members and they lose interest in the same.

4.6 Most of the members of the M.M. are aged women. Steps may be taken to popularise the movement among younger women of the village. During the visit when this question was raised then one women replied "This is an association of old women, what will the young 'Bahus' (daughter-in-laws) do here"? The other woman pointed out "Bahu Kahan Handti Pheregi? (Where will the daughter-in-law roam about in these meetings)?" Another woman stated "our daughter-in-laws are not free, they have enough work to do in the fields and to look after children at home. Where is the time for these meetings?"

4.6.1 All these statements indicate that women are not convinced of the utility of the M.M. The G.Ss. should be properly oriented to convey meaningful messages to the women through these M.Ms. so that they may understand the utility of such association for them and their families. There is a dire need to convince the village women that there is something else also to look for in life beyond attending routine house-hold chores and rearing up children. They should learn to treat (and assert) themselves as a person and not as a slave or commodity.

4.7 Haryana Government has empowered M.M. in a village to inspect the work of the Safai Karamchari recently appointed under cleanliness drive and the functioning of the Aganwaries. But M.M. members feel that no one listens to

the complaints in the concerned office so why should any one create enimity with the wrong doers. The authorities should try to develop confidence in the members by setting examples.

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Surakhpur Tappa Haveli

(Block Jhajjar, District Rohtak)

1. An Overview:

1.1 Surkhpur Tappa Haveli is about 10 Kilo Meter from Jhajjar. It has two Anganwaries for the children in the age group 3-6 years. There is one primary school which is co-educational.

1.2 A registered M.M. was started in this village on 14.8.86 (Registration No.582). At present there are 28 members on its rolls. Out of these 19 are Jat, 1 Brahmin, 5 Scheduled Caste and 3 belong to Backward Class. All the office bearers are Jat. Only two out of the 8 office bearers are literate (studied upto fifth class). Smt. Rajo is the elected Pradhan of the Mahila Mandal. She is an aged, active, social Jat women. Her husband had been in the army so she got an opportunity to see different parts of India. This exposure has helped her to be an emancipated

person. Though herself being illiterate she values education of girls and strongly believes that girls should learn to be economically self-reliant. Her daughter-in-law is running the Anganwari in the village and her two daughters are working as A.N.M. in the Health Department at Narnaul. She and her retired husband encourage village girls to study and undergo some professional training which may enable them to stand on their own feet.

1.3 The Pradhan and most of the members are the belivers of 'Rathaswami' sect. As such they have no faith in higher or lower castes. There is a perfect harmony among the members of all castes.

1.4 Most of the past records of the M.M. were not readily available. Analysis of the available records revealed that main emphasis in the meetings

was on Satsang; family planning; small savings; growing trees; keeping the surroundings clean; and the education of girls.

2. Observation and Suggestions:

2.1 It is appreciable that M.M. members lay emphasis on the education of girls and understand the necessity of making them economically self-reliant in the present social context.

2.2 M.M. Pradhan is presenting a rôle model for other women in the village. She has educated her daughters; has encouraged her daughter-in-law to take up a job of running the Anganwari; lives in harmony with her daughter-in-law; accompanies her husband freely when he goes out of the village and is her perfect life companion. Other members appreciate her way of living and try to inculcate the same behaviour in them.

2.3 It was suggested to the members to give representation to the weaker sections in the M.M. executive to solicit their active involvement. They agreed that during the next elections they will take care of this aspect.

2.4 The members strongly feel the necessity of a M.M. Bhawan, where they may hold their meetings, conduct Satsang and meditate. They desire that higher authorities should intervene with the village Panchayat and get them this facility. They were advised to pursue the matter through village Panchayat.

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Dighal

(Block Beri, District Rohtak)

An Overview:

1.1 Dighal is about 10 Kilo Meter from Beri which is the block headquarter of the Mahila Mandal. The village has 12 Anganwaries and there are separate schools for boys and girls upto tenth class.

1.2 Eleven 'Safai Karamcharies' have been appointed under the recently introduced 'cleanliness of village' scheme. Most of them are women. As per instructions they are to work under the supervision of the Mahila Mandal (M.M.) of the village.

1.3 A registered M.M. (Registration No.370 dt. March, 1980) was formed in the village about nine years back. At present there are 25 members on its rolls. Out of these 18 are Jat, 2 Brahmin, 2 Scheduled Caste and 3 belong to Backward Class. Smt. Ram Piyari is the M.M. Pradhan. She is the second elected Pradhan since the inception of the M.M.

She is being assisted by an elected executive of 7 members. All of them are Jat by caste. All the office bearers including the Pradhan are illiterate.

1.4 Records of the M.M. were analysed from 12.1.85 to 23.1.89. These revealed that during the last 39 months 70 meetings were held as detailed below:

Year	No. of Meetings	Remarks
1985	3	1. Period covered is two months.
1986	19	2. Systematic records had been maintained of all the meetings.
1987	21	
1988	24	
1989	3	period covered is one month.
Total	70	

1.4.1 During these meetings the discussions revolved around growing fruit trees; smokeless chullahas, family planning scheme; small savings; kitchen

garden; cleanliness of homes and surroundings; use of dustbins; care of woollen clothes; common diseases among children; health care of children; Keertan; storage or grains; organising cultural activities in the village; sending children to Anganwari and importance of adult education; income generating projects; election of office bearers; purchasing 'Dari', utensils etc. for M.M.; preparing pickles; need for proper ventilation in the homes; and vacation of the M.M. Bhavan.

2. General Observations and Suggestions

2.1 The M.M. is functioning for the last 9 years but there are only 25 members on its rolls in such a big village. This is not a pleasant situation. Intensive efforts need be made by the field staff and the M.M. Pradhan to popularise the movement among larger number of women in the village. But it will be possible only when the women are made

to realise the utility of working together for their empowerment through mutual efforts. At present they do not see much use of becoming the members of the Mahila Mandal. A conversation which took place with them during the visit to the village is reported below:

"Are you a member of this M.M. ?"

"No"

'Why not ?'

'What is the use? What can we get by becoming members ?"

'What do you want'?

"Some type of loans; free insecticides; seeds etc. and any other things which government may give us free of cost".

"But you are a rich woman, having so much land in village, why should you accept free things from the government ? You are putting on a 'Dupatta', with so costly 'Kinari' on it, can't you purchase

insecticides for storing grains ? What is the use of spending on this 'Kinari' if you ask for free things. You should rather help your poor sisters in the village. If the government will go on distributing free things, they will put tax on all of you ----------"

"As far as loans are concerned the government has given the facility, you should ask the Mukheya Seveka to guide you in this connection as to which agency is to be approached .....".

The conversation indicates that an everage rural woman has a narrow outlook towards life. She does not see any thing beyond the four walls of home. There is a need to develop positive values and broadening their outlook towards life. They should learn to be self dependent and a general tendency to expect subsidies from the government should be discouraged among the villagers.

2.2 The 'cleanliness scheme' has been launched in the village but still the village gives a dirty look. M.M. members should properly supervise the work of the 11 Safai Karmcharies appointed for the purpose. They should work in close collaboration with the village Panchayat and fine the households which throw garbage in the lanes.

2.3 Though most of the members of the members of the M.M. are illiterate yet no serious efforts had been made by the Gram Seveka or Mukheya Seveka to contact District Adult and Non-formal Education officer to put in intensive efforts to educate these woman under adult literacy programme. Education had been accorded a low priority in their meetings' chart. During the year 1986 only once (on 17.6.86) the question of admitting children to Anganwari was discussed in a meeting in a very casual manner. During the year 1988 four meetings were held wherein I.C.D.S. workers and adult education supervisor

also participated. In these meetings the importance of sending children to Anganwari and adult literacy were discussed. But no follow up work was done thereafter. It is felt that educational aspect of the girls and women in rural areas should get a better deal.

2.4 All the office bearers are Jat. Intentional efforts should have been made to give representation to all the castes specially the weaker sections of the society in the M.M. executive.

2.5 During the visit to the village when the investigator asked about the house of Ms. Ram Piyari, the M.M. Pradhan then the common reply was "Uske Admi ka Nam Batao, Birbani ko Gam Me kon Jane" (Tell the name of the husband of the M.M. Pradhan, who knows a woman in any village).

It was painful to note that in the villages the women have no identity. They are known only by the names of their husbands. Holding of an important position

of the 'Pradhan' of a women organisation (sponsored by the state government) by a woman has no meaning for the villagers. Her identity is known only as the wife of a man. This is a limit of sexist bias. There is an urgent need to organise awareness generation programmes about the equality of sexes for the rural areas.

2.6 A M.M. Bhavan had been constructed at the outskirt of the village. But the building is not being used by anyone because of some conflict between the two groups. It is said that basis of the quarrel is that the land donated for the construction belonged to one group of persons and the sarpanch belongs to another group. He got the building constructed through personal efforts. The first group did not want that the Sarpanch should get credit. So they are not allowing anyone to use that building. They have thrown garbage near that building, broken

the window panes and make noise if someone holds meeting there. Whatever may be the authentic reason of the conflict, the fact remains that M.M. had not been able to make use of the place which had been provided for them with great difficulty. It is suggested that the concerned B.D.O. should look into the matter and try to resolve the conflict. If need be, the intervention of the district authorities may be sought to sort out the matter otherwise the money spent on the construction of the building is going waste. The M.M. Pradhan and the field staff should urgently follow up the matter with the block or district administration and learn to assert their rights.

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Chimanpura

(Block Beri, District Rohtak)

The Mahila Mandal was visited on 23.1.89. Significant aspects of the M.M. are briefly narrated in the following paragraphs.

1. Chimanpura is about 7 kilometer from Beri. It is a small village situated on the Jhajjar Road. This is mainly inhabited by 'Ahirs'.

2. In the village there is one Anganwari for the children in the age-group 3-6 years and a primary school which has co-education.

3. A registered M.M. (Registration number 383) is functioning in the area since 5.8.86. At present there are 22 members on its rolls. An elected executive of 8 members has been formed to conduct the activities of the M.M. Smt. Shakuntla is the elected Pradhan. She is a young (about 30 years), Ahir, active, social, intelligent, Ahir women and has great enthusiasm to do something for the women

of her village. During conversation she repeatedly says "You give me guidelines, implementation of the same is my job". But unfortunate part of the story is that field staff does not take the desired interest. Secondly the G.S. herself is not an empowered women and is not mentally committed to work as per her job chart.

This is a vicious circle which needs to be broken at some point. It is felt that there is an urgent need to orient the M.S., G.S. and the M.M. Pradhans in the process of empowerment. They should be helped to develop positive self-image and confidence. They can certainly better the lot of the rural women through mutual help and collective bargaining with the concerned authorities.

4. Most of the members of the M.M. including the Pradhan are illiterate. But no efforts have ever been made by the field staff to educate them or to contact the District Adult and Non-formal Education

Officer to make provision for Adult literacy programme in the village.

5. Records of the M.M. were analysed for the period 8.7.85 to 18.1.89. It was found that 56 meetings have been conducted by the G.S. during this period. The frequency of the meetings were as follows:

S.No.	Year	No. of Meetings	Remarks
1.	1985	3	The period covered is 6 months.
2.	1986	8	
3.	1987	8	
4.	1988	27	
5.	1989	10	The period covered is one month.
	Total	56	

5.1 Main emphasis in the meetings has been on installation of smoke-less Chullahas and family planning work.

The other items like growing trees and maintaining kitchen garden; keeping home and surroundings clean; nutrition diet; care of clothes; health care of children etc. have been discussed off and on. Education of children and suggestions for starting any productive project have been touched casually only once (on 5.4.88 and 8.9.88 respectively). It is suggested that education should get its due importance in the job chart of the G.Ss. and the M.Ss. The work performance of the field staff should be judged also on the point of spreading education in children and adults.

5.2 The G.S. should conduct meetings of the M.M. on regular intervals. During some of the months the frequency of meetings soars very high and in the other months it has gone conspicuously low. The G.S. should visit the village as per needs of the members of the M.M. and not as per her own convenience.

6. The Pradhan had been a member of the Panchayat Samiti for 5 years before the election of the M.M. Pradhan. She has great potential which needs to be utilised by the field staff for the upliftment of the women of the village.

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Gadi Kheri

(Block Lakhan Manjra, District Rohtak)

1. Introduction:

1.1 The Village Gadi Kheri is situated on the Rohtak Hissar Road, A Mahila Mandal was started in this village in December 1982 (Registration No.45). At present 28 members are on its roll. Out of these 16 are Jat, 5 Brahmin, 3 Scheduled Caste and 4 belong to Backward class. Ms. Balwant Kaur an aged, Jat women is the M.M. Pradhan. She has received education upto primary level. There are 7 other elected office bearers in the M.M. executive. Out of these 4 are Jat, 1 Brahmin and 2 Harijans. Except the Secretary who has studied upto eight class, the remaining 6 office bearers are illiterate.

1.2 The members were asked the reasons for electing Ms. Balwant Kaur as the M.M. Pradhan. Their reply was that she fulfils 3 criteria. Firstly, she is educated so she can present their problems in a better way. Secondly her children are

settled so she has spare time to devote to the activities of M.M. Thirdly she is aged so she can move about freely in the village and motivate women for various activities.

1.3 There is one Aganwari and a co-educational school upto eighth class. The women are satisfied with the educational programmes of the school but are not very happy with the Aganwari. They feel that the organisers do not properly distribute the ration among the children which is given for them by the state government.

2. <u>Analysis of the Activities of the Mahila Mandal</u>

2.1 Records of the M.M. were analysed from 28.12.82 to 9.1.89. These revealed that 128 meetings were held during the last 6 years (1983-1988) as per

details given below:

S.NO.	YEAR	NO. OF MEETINGS	REMARKS
1.	1983	28	
2.	1984	31	
3.	1985	9	There was change in the Gram Sevika
4.	1986	21	
5.	1987	19	
6.	1988	20	
	Total	128	

2.2 During the meetings the discussions revolved around election of Pradhan; nutritious diet for children; cleanliness of homes and surroundings; Keertan; adult educationfamily planning programme; storing grains; smoke-less chullahas; small saving schemes; balanced diet; kitchen garden; preparation of pickles, jams; use of dustbins; proper arrangement

of things in the homes; growing fruit trees; precautions from cholera and malaria; evils of dowry system; stiching clothes; knitting sweater; immunisation programme; and admission of children in the Balwari.

3. Observations and Suggestions:

3.1 The question of adult education and children's admission to Balwaries has been discussed 18 times during the M.M. meetings held in the last 6 years. Efforts were made to make the members learn writing their names and number. District Adult Education Officer may be contacted by the Gram Seveka for arranging functional literacy programme for the members.

3.2 In the year 1985 the M.M. received incentive prize of Rs.1,000 from the state government for active participation in various activities for the upliftment of rural folk. It is felt that the

M.M. has great potential which can be utilised further to the great advantage of the rural women.

3.3 Some income generating projects suitable for the area may be started to give employment to the women. They are very keen to do something which may improve their economic status but they have no access to credit and infrastructual facilities. They even lack managerial skill and need support for marketing services. It is hoped that the establishment of Women's Development Corporations (WDCS) envisaged to be set up by the end of the current financial year (Hindustan Times dated 11.1.89) may change the economic lot of the rural women speedily in India.

3.4 The member badly feel the necessity of at least an office room for the M.M. They said that whenever a meeting is held in any menber's house then the life pattern of the other members in that family gets disturbed. Their male members have to

go out of the home, children cannot study and the other members do not feel free to perform their daily house-hold chores etc. More-over the members themselves do not feel free to discuss their problems in the presence of the other persons in that family. They wanted the B.D.O. to intervene and get a room constructed for the M.M. through the village Panchayat.

3.5 It was felt that the G.S. and the M.S. should give proper outlet to the feelings of the members and try to study their problems in depth. They should also be more sensitive to their difficulties and make sincere efforts to find out suitable remedies for the same with the help of senior officers at the block level.

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Taja Manjra

(Block Lakhan Manjra, District Rohtak)

1. Introduction:

1.1 The village Taja Manjra is about 12 Kilo meter from the block headquarter. There are two Aganwaries and a co-educational school upto eigth class. The villagers have great praise for the instructional programme in the school but they are not very happy with the functioning of the Aganwaries. They have an apprehension that the organisers of these Aganwaries misappropriate the ration meant for the children. The village gives a cleaner look in comparison to the other villages in the block.

1.2 A registered Mahila Mandal is being run in the village. It has 26 members at present on its roll. Out of these 13 are Jat, 5 Brahmin, 3 Scheduled Caste and 5 belong to Backward class. Ompati, a middle aged Brahmin women, who is illiterate is the elected Pradhan of the M.M.

There are 7 other elected office bearers to share responsibilities of the M.M. Six of them are Jat and one is Harijan. Among the 8 office bearers one has studied upto primary level, the other one unto middle and another upto High School. The remaining 5 are illiterate. The election of the present executive has taken place only six months back after the term of the last executive was over.

Analysis of the Activities of the Mahila Mandal:

Records of the M.M. were readily available from 19.6.88 to 9.1.89. These revealed that during 7 months 21 meetings of the M.M. were held. Main points of discussion during these meetings were election of the M.M. Pradhan and the other office bearers; family planning programme; small saving schemes; health care of children; keeping homes and surroundings clean; and nutritious diet for pregnant women.

3. Observations and Suggestions:

Most of the members of the M.M. are illiterate but the question of adult education has not been discussed or given any weightage by the G.S. or the Pradhan. Most of the time of the G.S. and the Pradhan has been spent in motivating village women for family planning operation. No other constructive activities have been discussed or undertaken by the M.M. The records indicate that Gram Seveka (G.S.) alongwith the M.M. Pradhan had been frequently visiting homes and motivating women to get themselves operated after 2 or 3 children. Simultaneously this time could be utilised by them to ensure that girls in the age-group 6-14 years are positively enrolled and retained in the school. They could make efforts to bring awareness among women about the equality of status in the family; non-discriminatory behaviour towards the girl child

and the other aspects envisaged in the NPE 1986. The visits could be better planned to co-ordinate various activities to achieve better results.

3.1.1 Taking a clue from this situation it is suggested that regular orientation courses may be organised for the Mukheya Sevekas and the Gram Sevekas to equip them in the content of the co-ordinated messages intended to be conveyed to the grass-root level as well as the extension methods. The training imparted to them long back in the beginning of their career appears to be out-dated.

3.2 The Pradhan though a simpleton and illiterate, is enthusiastic to bring positive change in the rural women. She is keen to retain the position of the Pradhan inspite of the opposition of a strong, literate (high school passed) M.M. member Indravati, who thinks herself much more superior to the Pradhan. The members desire that some income generating project(s) may be initiated

Kaloi Khas

(Block Rohtak, Haryana)

1. Introduction:

1.1 The village Kaloi Khas is about 15 kilo meter from the district headquarter. A registered Mahila Mandal was started in the village on 5.8.86 (Registration No. 397). Smt. Nano Devi, an aged, smart Jat women is the elected Mahila Mandal Pradhan. Before it she had been the lady Panch in the village Panchayat. She is an active and bold women and does not hesitate to present and follow up the case of any village women with the concerned government officer at block or district level. The village women bank upon her for help whenever there is any problem. She is a widow and her extrovert behaviour with the men in authority has sometimes brought her a bad name because villagers are not used to the idea of a rural women being so extrovert

them about different developments in the state.

3.3.1 The Gram Sevika may be provided reading material like newspaper, magazines and a portable tape-recorder. Before going to the village she should acquaint herself with the important news of the fortnight, prepare or collect some visuals (cartoons, charts etc.) and record some jokes, statements conveying messages in an interesting manner to the rural women. Rural women get fed up with the repetition of the same routine talks of G.S. In this way, their visits go waste and it is constant financial loss to the Public Exchequer in view of the rough cost-benefit analysis.

3.4 The members feel the necessity of an office for the Mahila Mandal. They feel that till any Mahila Mandal Bhavan is constructed atleast a small room may be provided to them by the Panchayat to keep their records and hold meetings. This appears a genuine requirement of the M.M.

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and bold specifically when her husband is not alive. But the Pradhan appears to have become immune to this back-bitting as she feels thatshe is on the right path and her aim in life is to be self-reliant and help the persons who are right and just.

1.2 At present there are 20 members on the list of the M.M. Most of them are illiterate. All the office bearers are Jat. Only 3 members of the M.M. executive can sign, the other 5 give their consent by putting thumb impression.

2. Analysis of the Activities of the Mahila Mandal:

2.1 After the analysis of the records of the M.M. from 1.7.86 to 10.1.89 it was found that 45 meetings of the M.M. were convened during this period. The year-wise analysis of these are

as follows:

S.No.	Year	No. of Meetings	Remarks
1.	1986	9	The period covered is 6 months
2.	1987	14	
3.	1988	20	
4.	1989	2	The period covered is one month
	Total	45	

2.2 During these 45 meetings the discussions revolved around election of Pradhan and other office bearers, use of dustbins; smokeless-chullahas; 'Pacca' place for kitchen utencils; Keertan; small saving schemes; family planning; nutritious diet for children; growing fruit trees; proper arrangements of things to give better look; care of clothes; admitting children in the Aganwaries; income generating projects; storing grains and immunisation of children.

3. Observations and Suggestions:

3.1 Though most of the members are iliterate yet the question of adult education or the education of girls has never been discussed during the last 31 months. Gram Seveka should draw the attention of the members towards this aspect. Even admission of children to Aganwaries has been discussed only once (16.4.87). Education of girl child may be given more weightage in the meetings.

3.2 There is no representation of the weaker section in the M.M. The Pradhan may be requested to pay attention towards enrolling them. Efforts may be made to enlist more members to the M.M. from the village. Twenty is too small a number for this village.

3.3 The Pradhan has motivated 200 homes to get the smoke-less chullahas installed. It is a good achievement of the M.M.

3.4 The Pradhan has T.V. and V.C.R. at her home. She is of the view that in the M.M. meetings some video films on the current problems may be shown because the members get bore by listening to the same points from the G.S. repeatedly.

3.5 With such an enthusiastic women as the M.M. Pradhan the M.M. should take up some income generating projects to better the economy of the members.

3.6 It is felt that the potentialities of the M.M. have not been utilised to the maximum. If G.S. and other developmental agencies take required interest results can be achieved in improving the quality of life of the women in this village.

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Bhalot

(Block Rohtak, District Rohtak)

1. An Overview:

1.1 Bhalot is situated on the Rohtak-Sonepat Road and is about ten kilo meter from the District headquarter. About a decade back a Mahila Mandal was started in the village (Registration number 87 dt. 15.6.78). Since its inception Smt. Chandro Devi, an old Jat women (around 68 years) is the M.M. Pradhan. Though illiterate, she is mentally alert and has insight into the problems of the rural women. She became widow, when quite young and reared up a family of five children single handedly. The members of the M.M. affectionately call her 'Dadi' (Grand-mother). She qually responds to their affection. Whenever any member has any health or other problems, she accompanies her and because of her age feels free to talk to the concerned officer without any hesitation. In this way

she is helpful to the young village women in getting their problems redeemed. Whenever government officers come to the village for motivating women for immunisation of their children, regular check up of pregnant women, family planning programmes, opening small saving accounts in the post office etc. then they also take the help of Dadi, the M.M. Pradhan, to effectively convey the message at the grass-root level. In this way she works as a liaison between the government agencies and the members of the Mahila Mandal. It is a commong sight in the village 'Dadi' accompanying children to the Aganwaries, schools, Primary Health Centre for immunisation, medical treatment etc. alongwith their mothers; or taking women to the Primary Health Centre for medical check up or soliciting medical advice about family welfare methods. She even accompanies women to the district headquarter if

they need her help. Because of her initiative six women are getting old age pension of Rs.100/- per month under the newly introduced scheme of the state government. The members love her and donot want to replace her with any other member as the M.M. Pradhan.

1.2 At present there are 25 members in the M.M. Out of these 15 are Jat, 4 Brahmin, 3 Scheduled Caste and 3 belong to Backward class. All the office bearers are Jat. Except one (Secretary) all the office bearers are illiterate.

1.3 The village has 3 Aganwaries and separate school upto tenth class for girls and boys. Thereafter they go to Rohtak for higher studies.

1.4 Most of the lanes in the village are 'Pucca' and the village presents a cleaner look than many other villages of the block.

2. <u>Analysis of the Activities of the Manila Mandal:</u>

2.1 An analysis of the activities of the M.M. from

21.5.82 to 10.1.89 revealed that 119 meetings were convened during the last 6 years and 8 months. The frequency of the meetings had been as stated below:

S.No.	Year	No. of Meetings	Remarks
1.	1982	11	The period covered is seven months
2.	1983	24	
3.	1984	15	a. Change in the Seveka b. G.S. went on maternity leave
4.	1985	19	
5.	1986	22	
6.	1987	14	a. Change in G. Seveka b. Emphasis on home visits rather than general meetings
7.	1988	13	
8.	1989	1	The period covered is one month
	Total	119	

2.2 The discussions during these meetings revolved around running income generating project; cleanliness of village by co-operative efforts;

'Keertan' (religious gathering) kitchen garden; growing fruit trees; small saving schemes; construction of emprovised bathrooms and 'Pucca' place for washing utencils; need for nutritious diet for children and preparation of certain items like banana and 'Sabudana Kheer'; Smoke-less choollahas;storage of grains; care of clothes; use of improvised dustbins; construction of wooden shelves for keeping things in order in the homes; need for balanced diet and its easily available components in the village; necessity of ventilators and windows in the homes; health care of children; preparation of pickles, jams etc; family planning programmes educational trip; loan for purchasing buffaloes; and teaching writing one's name.

3. <u>Observations and Suggestions:</u>

3.1 One of the striking feature of the M.M. is the cordial relationship among the members

which is a mix of different age-groups of women. The Pradhan herself has been able to set an example of the ideal relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in her home. Her daughter-in-laws are so much mixed up and at liberty with her that for an outsider it is difficult to distinghish whether they are daughters or daughter-in-laws of the village. In a Haryana Village it is very rare to find such relations praising each other. Even the other younger members of the M.M. are quite at ease with the Pradhan and other elderly women of the group.

3.2 The M.M. has only 25 members. The Pradhan should pay attention to enrol more members and to spread the movement among other women in the villge. A person of the status of the Pradhan is capable of heading a bigger family of the rural women.

3.3 The M.M. executive has no representation of the weaker sections. Gram Seveka (G.S.) should make

intentional efforts to get them elected as office bearers of the M.M. If need be there should be a provision of nominating them on the executive. The importance of cleanliness has been repeatedly emphasised in the meetings of the M.M. and its effect is visible. The homes and the streets are comparatively cleaner than other villages in the block. Another aspect which has been mostly discussed during 1984 to 1986 is the need for adopting family planning methods. It is said that the then Chief Medical Officer actively involved the Mukheya Seveka and the Gram Seveka in this programme. Hence there is awareness about the programme in the villagers even to-date. Need for depositiong money in the small saving schemes is the third aspect which has been mostly talked about in the meetings. This aspect gained importance because every Deputy Commissioner is keen about the implementation of these schemes.

3.4.1 Most of the M.M. members are illiterate. They cannot write their names and put thumb impression to give their consent. Still education is the most neglected point in these meetings. During the span of about 7 years only twice (on 8.1.86 and 14.1.87) the importance of adult education and need for Learning to write one's name was discussed and only once (on 17.4.87) the desireability of admitting children in the Aganwaries was talked about. It is suggested that the District Education Officer and the District Adult Education Officer should catch hold of this agency to convey the message of education to the far flung villages.

3.4.2 It is appreciable that the health care of children and the pregnant women has been emphasised during the meetings. It is suggested that the question of nutritious diet and health care of aged and the young women and the girls in the growing age

should also be discussed in the meetings to bring awareness about this aspect among the rural women. The idea of health care of girl child without any sex discrimination should be brought home to the minds of the rural folk.

3.5 It is appreciable that there had been good attendence of the members and lively atmosphere during the meetings. This exhibits their interest in the movement. They should however, increase the frequency of the meetings and learn to meet without the presence of the Gram Seveka. Because the ultimate aim of the movement is to help them to overcome their problems through mutual sharing, help and cooperation.

3.5.1 It was felt during the meeting that the members are not clear about the objectives of the scheme and invariably look towards the G.S. for obtaining guidelines for conducting any activity. Their usual statement is "Whatever Bhainji (G.S.) will tell us we will do". It was not very heartening

to hear it from the members of a M.M. which is more than 10 years old. By this time the movement should have taken firm roots in the village soil and developed competence in the members for self analysis of their problems. At this juncture it is expected that they should point out towards their problems and ask Bhain Ji for the possible solutions and remedies.

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Bhor

(District Rohtak, Haryana)

Haryana is a state where Mahila Mandal movement has been initiated enthusiastically. Hence it was felt to make a situational study of a few Mahila mandals in one of its 12 districts to find out their strong and weak links. The ultimate purpose was to explore the possibility of empowering these agencies to such an extent that they become instrumental in the upliftment of rural women.

To start with district Rohtak had been selected for the purpose. It is appreciable that there is not even a single village in the district whichis without a Mahila Mandal (M.M.). Rather there are certain large villages which have two M.Ms. The district can boast of having 432 registered M.M. in its 11 blocks. It appears that the movement has taken root in the district but whether it has developed in the way it should have been will have to be ascertained.

To make on the spot observations of the functioning of a M.M., a village Bhor in District Rohtak in the State was visited alongwith Gram Seveka of that area to make a situational study of the same. The significant facts about its working, achievements and general problems faced by the M.M. functionaries are narrated in the following pages.

The village is on Rohtak - Sonepat Road and has a mixed population of various castes. Since the inception of the M.M. five years back Smt. Saraswati Devi is the Mahila Mandal (M.M.) Pradhan. She was first elected for 2 years asper usual tenure and is so popular that she is running the third term. The other office bearers of the M.M. (who are also elected by the members) are:

Ms. Susheela	- Up-Pradhan
Ms. Chameli	- Secretary
Ms. Savitri	- Joint Secretary
Ms. Dhanpati	- Treasurer

All the office bearers have undergone training for a week at Nilokheri and they feel that training programme has helped in widening their mental horizon.

The M.M. Pradhan has a learning attitude and will be going on study tour shortly for 10 days. The other members are also happy to know about it because they will be keenly waiting for the information about many a good things which 'Behanji' the elder sister will be sharing with them on her return from tour. These tours are sponsored by the state government and the interested person has to pay Rs.300/- from her own pocket for the trip. The rest of the expenditure is met by the state government.

2. Break up of the M.M. Caste-wise is as follows:

Caste	No. of Members	Remarks
Jat	9	
Brahmin	4	
Khati	4	Covered under backward class.
Bairagi	1	
Chamar	6	Covered under Scheduled class
Dhanak	2	
Total Members	26	

3. Significant points about the functional aspect of the M.M. are noted below:

3.1 The M.M. Pradhan is an enthusiastic worker and feels committed to the movement. She has an inner desire to do something for the welfare of the rural women. She is pleasant to talk to; practical in her outlook to suggest and find out solution to the problems; and strongly believes that all human beings are equal and any type of

segregation on the basis of caste or class is undesireable.

3.2 It appears that she may be the initiator of M.M. in the village and her personality may have been instrumental in enrolling other members. Her broad outlook towards life and humane attitude towards the lower castes may have helped in convincing other members to enrol themselves for the M.M. The co-operation and encouragement of the G.S. may have also helped in the smooth running of the organisation.

3.3 There is a perfect harmony among the members belonging to different castes. During meetings the tea prepared by a 'Chamar' member was taken by all the members including higher castes without any hesitation. The Scheduled Caste women were sitting in a mixed way with higher caste members. There was absolutely no segregation. One could see that it was their usual way of conducting the meetings.

The Pradhan informed that there were two temples one constructed and maintained by higher castes and the other by the lower castes. But when there was 'Satsangs' then all the members irrespective of caste went to the temples and attended the Satsang without restriction or hesitation. This appears a big achievement of this M.M.

3.4 M.M. meetings are held once or twice in a month. There are periods when no meetings are held. These are the months when the members are busy in the fields or works concerning agriculture at homes.

3.5 They find that these meetings are helpful to them. These provide an opportunity to share individual joys and sorrows and work as an outlet for them. They usually start the meetings with 'Satsang' or 'Kirtan' and distribute 'Prasad' in turn. They donot collect money during the 'Kirtan' because the Pradhan has a feeling that this practice may work as a deterrent in the attendence

of meetings by the members. These 'Satsangs' provide religious entertainment and work as morale boosters for the members. In past these meetings have also been utilised by G.S. in informing them about the various food preparations e.g. Suzi Ka Halwa for small kids and old people; preparation of 'Sharbat', Achars (pickles) etc; craft works; welfare schemes launched by the government. Due to the motivation of G.S. now members have grown fruit trees (Mostly palmgrade, Guava and peach) in their court-yards as well as in their fields.

3.6 M.M. Pradhan has got 300 smoke-less 'Chullahas' (Ovens) installed in the village. She informed that when she heard from the G.S. that 400 such chullahas have been sent to Sarpanch for instalment in the village homes free of cos she approached him with a request that these may be installed in the houses of the members of M.M.

When she found him reluctant she met B.D.O. Rohtak and with his intervention got the same issued and installed in the homes of all the M.M. members. Later on when the Sarpanch found difficulty in motivating rural women to get the same installed in their homes, he approached the M.M. Pradhan with a request to get more Chullahas from him and motivate other women to get the same installed in their homes. In this way she got 300 such ovens installed in the village by showing the utility by practical demonstration.

She stated that these Sarpanch try to usurp the credit themselves and donot allow women to come forward. They simply desire to use them as a tool to get work done for them but donot wish to share the official credit or recognition conferred on them.

3.7 Another significant achievement of the M.M. Pradhan is that she got the government water top installed before the house where meetings of the M.M. are held. For this also she had to seek the intervention of local M.L.A. Xien (Senior Engineer) and the then state Health Minister. Recognising her interest in the upliftment of rural women, the then Health Minister recommended her name for Mahila Pradhan (Congress(I) for Kalei 'Halka'). She is still holding that position simultaneously.

The water level in this village is very low, so this water tap has proved a big boon for the members. They take water from it irrespective of their low or high caste and are proud of their achievement.

These achievements may appear not of much significance to an outsider but have been instrumental in developing self confidence in the members and their faith in the collective efforts.

4. <u>Future Plans:</u> There are a few problems which are disturbing the mind of the M.M. Pradhan she informed that:

4.1 There are no proper latrine facilities for women. They have to wade through dirty, stagnated water to go to the field for this purpose. She feels that government should give Rs.1200/- to all the willing persons who want to get latrines constructed in their homes and not only to scheduled castes. However she is pursuing with the authorities to give this grant to the scheduled caste members of the M.M. expeditiously.

4.2 There should be a provision of M.M. building where regular office may be held and meetings may be conducted. She is keen to find out the ways to get a solution to this problem.

4.3 Initial grant for starting certain production centre (s) may be given to M.M. so that they may start some project, which may improve their

economic status. She plans to start a retailed general store on co-operative basis but paucity of funds is coming in the way.

5. <u>Obstacles in the way of strengthening the Mahila Mandal Movement in the villages</u>

After observing the functioning of the Mahila Mandal at Bhor in district Rohtak and discussions with the concerned officers it was feld that there are certain general problems being faced by the M.M. movement which are obstructing its wave, in the rural areas. Efforts have been made to reflect in the following paragraphs, some of the significant hurdles which are not allowing the movement to blossom in the way it should have been.

5.1 Mahila Mandal Pradhan has no legal authority to pursue the matter and seak redemption to the problems of rural women. She does not enjoy any official status to assert herself with the bureaucracy. Even the village Surpanch does not recognise her authority. Her status is just like a head of any ordinary voluntary organisation.

5.2 They donot have any building or place to hold meetings or run regular office. The most surprising point about the situation is that a women can not go to a 'Chopal' in a village. It is a social taboo for any female to go there. So there is absolutely no question of their holding a meeting there. Even if an officer comes there to address the village folk to convey information about some important welfare programmes, they are forbidden to go to the Chopal. In this way they are deprived of vital information meant for them. They neither get proper exposure nor develop communication skills.

5.3 They donot have funds to meet even travelling expenses of the office bearers to pursue matters with the concerned officers outside village to solve their problems expediteously; to take up any welfare programmes for the rural women; to attend Block level quarterly meetings officially organised by the M.Ss or G.Ss; to initiate any

co-operative project to improve the economic status of members etc. Paucity of funds is a big hindrance in the way of strengthening M.M. movement in the rural areas.

5.4 Generally aged women are the members of M.M. They neither desire their daughter-in-laws to to become members of the same nor the daughter-in-laws are keen to come out of their homes for this purpose. Main reason for this indifferent attitude on their part is that its membership does not enhance their status or position or ascribe any power or authority or give any official recognition to them in the community. So they feel that joining M.M. is the work of those women who have no other work at home.

5.5 On the administrative side the Lady Circle Supervisor who is supposed to supervise the M.M. movement in the district has no independent official vehicle to go to the interiors of rural

areas to supervise and guide the functioning of M.Ms. She has to depend on the concerned Block Development Officer (B.D.O.) for the same. The B.D.O. himself has multifarious developmental programmes in the block to take care. Hence how-so-ever he may be willing in practice it is often quite difficult for him to co-ordinate his activities with the L.C.S. or to often spare the vehicle at his disposal for her. This was the impression which the investigator gathered during her discussions with the concerned officers. But no sweeping statement can be made in this regard unless the facts about the requisition slips sent by the L.C.S. and the number of times the vehicle provided to her and other relevant data (e.g. how many days in advance the requisition was made; how many times requisitions were confirmed but the vehicle was refused on the scheduled dates; vehicle made free by B.D.O. but L.C.S. could

not make use of the same due to official or personal reasons etc.) are systematically collected, analysed and conclusions derived thereon. But one point is definately clear that lack of the provision of official vehicle at the disposal of the L.C.S. does work as a handicap in the proper supervision and guidance of the M.Ms. in the rural areas.

5.5.1 As far as the administrative powers are concerned about the M.M. funds, leave, TA and other administrative matters of the operational staff in the field (MS; GS; craft-teachers) those are under the control of B.D.O. To ensure proper functioning of the M.M. is the responsibility of Lady Circle Supervisor (L.C.S.). This dual control is dysfunctional for the M.M. movement.

6. <u>The way out:</u>

No ready made suggestions or a single solution can be offered to overcome the problems stated above.

The solution (s) will have to be found out by collective thinking of all the functionaries in the field, administration and planning at the village, district, state and even national level.

The strategies will have to be worked out with the close collaboration of the practitioners. Hence it is felt that working of a few more Mahila Mandals may be observed to pool their problems at the grass-root level. Thereafter a threadbare analysis of the same may be made and a forum to discuss the same with the functionaries and the experts may be provided by WSU, NCERT to work out suitable strategies for the effective implementation of the M.M. movement.

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Bhesru Khurd

(Block Sampla, District Rohtak)

1. An Overview:

1.1 Bhesru Khurd is about 7 kilo meter from Sampla which is the block headquarter of the Mahila Mandal. The village has a co-educational school upto tenth class. There is one adult education centre but there is no provision of any Anganwari in the village.

1.2 It is a small, Jat dominated village having about 530 households. 'Cleanliness of village' scheme has been recently launched in the village and two 'Safai Karamcharies' have been appointed under the scheme. Both of the newly appointed persons are men.

1.3 Two hundred smoke-less chullahas had been installed in the village. The village women were satisfied about the functioning of these ovens.

1.4 A registered M.M. (Registration number 241, dtd. 23.7.84) was started in the village about 5 years back. At present there are 26 members on its rolls. Out of these 19 are Jat, 1 Brahmin, 1 Scheduled Caste and 5 belong to Backward class. Smt. Choto a Jat, rich, middle aged women is the M.M. Pradhan. She is educated upto middle class and is working as instructor of the adult education centre. Her husband is a headmaster in a school in some nearby village. The Pradhan is a sobre, hospitable women and is receptive to new ideas. All her children are grown up and well settled so she can devote time to the M.M. activities. Her husband also encourages her to work for the welfare of the women. There are 7 other elected M.M. members to share responsibilities with the Pradhan. Five of them are Jat, 1 Nai and 1 is Bania. Two of them are educated, one upto primary level and another upto middle level. The remaining five members are illiterate

1.5 Records of the M.M. were analysed from 26.6.84 to 24.1.89. It was found that 131 meetings were organised during the last 55 months. Details of the same are given below:

Year	No. of Meetings	Remarks
1984	14	The period covered is 6 months.
1985	34	
1986	23	
1987	17	
1988	40	
1989	3	The period covered is 1 month.
Total	131	

1.6 During these 131 meetings the discussions revolved around preparation of pickles, chatni etc., care of pregnant women; health care of children; small saving scheme; need for proper ventilation in the homes; family planning programmes;

kitchen garden; storage of grains; use of dustbins and importance of keeping homes and surroundings clean; smokeless chullahas; preparing different food items; keertan; stiching clothes; growing fruit trees; need for Pucca floor for washing utensils and taking bath; care of clothes; preparing soap at home; and need for taking nutritious diet.

2. Observation and Suggestions:

2.1 Though most of the members of the M.M. are illiterate yet the problem of education of adults or girls had never been discussed in the meetings held during the last 55 months. Field staff and the Pradhan should have taken extra pains to bring home the importance of education among the females. The adult education centre has been opened in the village about six months back but the response of the women is not bery encouraging. They need repeated motivation for joining and continuation of study under the adult literacy programme.

2.1.1 For retaining them at the adult literacy centres. There is a need to adopt some innovative techniques. The routine teaching methods do not interest them. They get bore soon and do not turn up to the centre for week's together.

2.2 The M.M. members are very keen that an Anganwari may be started in the village so that the lady workers who work in the agricultural fields may leave their children there. They also feel that this will give employment to one of them as an instructor. The matter may be pursued with C.D.P.O. by the M.S.

2.2.1 As far as the girls' education is concerned the village women are particular that they must join and attend the school regularly. But if any girl does not takeinterest in the studies or does not show good results or fails in the class repeatedly then they do not make any special efforts

to find out the reasons for her lack of interest in the studies. They simply withdraw her from the school and ask her to work at home. In that case they try to find out a suitable match and marry her off.

2.2.2 In such situation it is necessary that the school should take care of such girls and make arrangement for remedial teaching programme for them. It is a rich village and the parents will not hesitate to pay something extra for such remedial courses. But the question is of diagonosing the causes of the lack of interest of those girls in studies and taking initiative of arranging a remedial programme for them. The M.S. or G.S. can contact school head and talk about the problem to find out suitable solution.

2.3 Most of the time in the M.M. meetings had been spent in discussing about the details of preparing different varieties of food items. A few initial meetings for this purpose are understandable because these items work as hookings points to bring women to the fold of M.M. movement. But the main purpose of organising the M.M. should not be forgotten. The time should have been utilised in bringing awareness in the women about their social, political and legal rights. They should have been made to learn to assert for social justice, fair treatment and equality of sexes at home and in the community. They should ask for equal opportunities for their upliftment and should be enabled to take their own decisions and assert for their participation in the decision making processes concerning their welfare etc. The time has come in the life of the M.M. movement that women should be helped to broaden their outlook towards life.

2.4. It is appreciable that the elected executive of the M.M. is a mix of all castes and has a fair representation of weaker section of the village.

2.5 It is deplorable that in the rural areas of the country women have no identity of their own. They are only known by the name or profession of their husbands. In the case of this M.M. the Pradhan is also working as an Instructorof the adult education centre. But in the village she is only known by 'headmaster's wife'. No one recognises her by her name or her status. It is not fair for the mental health of a person.

2.6 This is a politically aware village. The wife of the Sarpanch is a member of the M.M. she (Ms. Jay Kaur) is a staunch believer of equality of sexes. She motivates elderly women to insist for M.M. Bhawan and contact the village Panchayat for the same. Ms. Jay Kaur was working as a G.S. when she was not married. But after marriage

her grand father-in-law did not allow her to continue with her job. She feels that girls should be enabled to resent such compulsive suggestions of the members of their matrimonial homes.

It is felt that if proper guidance may be given by the M.S. or G.S. then this M.M. can be instrumental in changing the lot and broadening the mental horizon of the village women in no time.

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Gaddi Sampla

(Block Sampla, District Rohtak)

1. An Overview:

1.1 Gaddi Sampla is about 2.5 km. from Sampla which is its block headquarter. The villagers feel proud to say that Sir Chotu Ram an important Jat leader, who worked tremendously for the education and financial upliftment of the agriculturists of the then that part of Punjab, which is at present known as Haryana, was born in this village. Till late his sister had been living in this village alongwith his parents. They proudly announce that Sh. Hans Raj, a Minister in Central Government also belongs to this village.

1.2 The village has no Aganwari. There is a co-educational school upto 8th class. M.M. members were not aware about the functioning of any adult education centre in the village.

1.3 A registered M.M. (number 520) was started in the village in the year 1986-87 (May 5, 1986). At present there are 25 members on its rolls. Out of these 21 are Jat, 1 Brahmin, 1 Scheduled Caste and 3 belong to Backward class. Smt. Kesar is the elected Mahila Mandal Pradhan since the formation of the M.M. She is a Jat, Middle aged, simple, kind hearted, social, active, hardworking, illiterate but intelligent women.

1.3.1 There are 7 other elected office bearers to share responsibilities with the M.M. Pradhan. Six of them are Jat and one of them is Khati (B.C.) There is no representation of Scheduled Caste. All the office bearers are illiterate.

1.4 Records of the M.M. from 9.10.86 to 23.1.89 were analysed to get information about the activities of the M.M. It was found that during the last 27 months 38 meetings were held.

1.4.1 During these meetings the discussions revolved around small saving scheme; kitchen garden; family planning; nutritious diet for children and pregnant women; health care of children; need for keeping homes and surroundings clean; preparation of pickles and different food items; smoke-less choollahas; need for starting income generating projects; use of improvised dustbins; immunisation of children against certain diseases; care of woollen clothes; praparation and use of home made medicines; and need for 'Pacca' floor for taking bath and cleaning utensils.

2. Observations and Suggestions:

2.1 Education of females has not been given any importance by the M.M. members. During the last 38 meetings it has never been discussed. Special efforts may be made to promote adult literacy programme among the rural women.

2.1.1 Most of the M.M. members and all the office bearers are illiterate. G.S. should motivate them to obtain at least functional literacy.

2.2 It is good that need for nutritious diet is repeatedly discussed in the meetings for the children and pregnant women. Its need for aged may also be utilised to develop a non-discriminatory attitude towards the girl child as far as providing nutritious diet and health care are concerned.

2.3 Due to the 'Village cleanliness' scheme, recently launched in the village, it gives a clean look. One male and one female sweeper have been appointed under the scheme.

2.3.1 The Pradhan did not know that the sweepers are to work under the M.M. and the state has made them responsible for their supervision. G.S. and M.S. should take care to avoid such communication gaps.

2.3.2 The Pradhan stressed the need for providing spade, 'Khurpa', dustbins etc. to the sweepers to enable them to do justice to their jobs.

2.3.3 The members requested the L.C.S. to put pressure on the village Panchayat through the B.D.O. to construct 'Pucca' lanes to avoid mud during the rainy season. When some of the lanes are 'Pucca' then why a few have been left 'Kacha' by the Panchayat. They should be unbiased in their decision about the construction work.

2.4 A striking point of this M.M. is the life history of the M.M. Pradhan. They are 5 sisters and no brother. She is the eldest in the family. She is married to a Lecturer in a degree college at Sonepat and is the mother of 3 sons. She had a great desire to look after her parents and grandfather so that they may not feel the absence of a son in the family. She expressed this desire to her in-laws and husband. They agreed that she may stay in the

village with her parents and her husband can go there on weakends and holidays. For the last 15 years this arrangement is working well. Now the grandmother has expired and the old parents are being looked after by her parents have expressed a desire to give all their landed property to her. But she has refused. She has requested them to distribute the same among her sisters who are financially less better off than her. The whole village is full of praise for this women. They say that she has set a model and other girls should follow her example.

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Khera Tharu

(Block Nahar, District Rohtak)

1. An Overview:

1.1 Khera Tharu is about 65 km. from Rohtak, its district headquarter and about 2.5 km. from Nahar which is its block headquarter. It is a small village mostly inhabited by Jats. The village gives a clean look.

1.2 The village has a primary school which is co-educational. There is no provision of any Anganwari, adult education centre and NFE Centre.

1.3 A registered M.M. (No.612) was started in this village on 20.1.81. Smt. Kamla Devi, a talented, aged, smart, lively, extrovert, Jat, illiterate women is heading the M.M. since its inception. She is the wife of an armyman who remained at non-family stations during most of the tenure of his service. So the land and the home had to be looked after by her. These circumstances

have developed initiative and confidence in her. Whatever she talks about, she talks with authority. The other 7 elected office bearers are also Jat. One of them has studied upto Matric and another upto 8th class. The rest of the 5 members are illiterate. At present there are 25 members on the roll of M.M. Out of these 19 are Jat, 3 Brahmin, and 3 belong to Backward class.

1.4 Records of the M.M. were analysed for the period 14.7.87 to 28.10.88. The previous records have been misplaced by the Pradhan or the G.S. Inspite of the best efforts made by the L.C.S. office these could not be traced and made available to the investigator.

1.4.1 The records revealed that during the last 17 months 36 meetings of the M.M. were convened. Main aspects discussed during these meetings were storing grains; Keertan; growing fruit

trees; small saving schemes; kitchen garden; need for 'Pacca' places for kitchen and taking, bath; proper care of clothes; craft works; proper ventilation and sanitation in the homes; family planning programme; preparation of pickles, soap; admitting children to formal school system; and immunisation programme for pregnant women and children."

2. Significant Observations and Suggestions:

2.1 The members feel the necessity of a middle school in the village. Because in its absence the girls have to go to 'Bahujholri' village for studying after primary school. Specially during rainy season it becomes difficult for the girls to cover this distance of about 2.5 k.m. daily. The G.S. should put forward effectively the difficulties of the rural girls and women to the higher authorities.

2.1.1 The village women though themselves mostly illiterate yet feel concerned about the education of the girls in younger groups. The Pradhan informed that she takes special interest and ensures that all the eligible girls join and attend the school regularly.

2.2 The members feel the necessity of an Anganwari for the children. In its absence the women have to leave their small children alone at home while going to the agricultural fields. It is not a very rich village and has a termite infected soil, so the women have to work hard alongwith men to produce crops from such soil.

2.3 The village should be covered under adult literacy compaign, so much talked about now-a-days, under N.L.M. programmes. There is an urgent need for opening a NFE centre and adult literacy centre in the village.

2.3.1 The members feel that a craft centre may be opened in the village under the developmental scheme. This will enable women and girls to learn tailoring and sewing of their family garments and help them to economise on this score.

2.4 The members complained that immunisation of children and pregnant women is not carried on satisfactorily in the village. The date and time of coming the team should be fixed so that the Pradhan may retain the needy women and children at home on that day. It is felt that the immunisation scheme needs proper monitoring in this area. The concerned B.D.O. may talk to the Block Medical Officer in this connection.

2.5 The members are of the view that regular elections of the Pradhan should be held after the prescribed tenure is over. This will give chance to other

members of the M.M. also to contest it. This is a genuine demand of the members because since the inception of the M.M. in 1981 only one Pradhan is continuing. This is contrary to the rules of the scheme. M.S. should look to the demand of the members immediately.

2.6 The members requested that the B.D.O. should pressurise the village Panchayat to provide them some place for holding meetings and keeping records. The M.S. should convey their demand to the B.D.O. with the same intensity with which they pleaded their case before her and the L.C.S.

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Nathera

(Block Nahar, District Rohtak)

1. An Overview:

1.1 Nathera is about 65 km. from the district headquarter Rohtak and about 8 km. from Nahar, which is its block headquarter. It is mostly populated by Ahirs. The village gives a clean look.

1.2 There is no Aganwari in the village and there is a provision of only a primary school which has co-education. For further studies the children go to Kosli which is about 2.5 k.m. from the village. There is no adult education or NFE Centre in the village.

1.3 A registered M.M. (Number 520) was started in the village on 19.1.81. At present, there are 26 members one its rolls. Out of these 15 are Ahir, 2 Brahmin, 5 Scheduled Caste and 4 Backward Caste.

Smt. Rama Devi, an aged, sweet natured, active, social, hospitable, Ahir women is the elected Pradhan of the M.M. She is illiterate and cannot even write her name. There are 7 other elected office bearers in the M.M. executive. Two of them are Scheduled Caste and 5 are Ahirs. Except one all are illiterate.

1.4 Records of the M.M. for the period 7.7.82 to 6.2.89 were analysed. The main points which were discussed during these meetings were storing grains; kitchen garden; growing fruit trees; election of M.M. Pradhan and other office bearers; family planning; need for starting income generating projects; nutritious diet; use of dustbin; importance of keeping homes and surroundings clean; sanitation; ventilation in living rooms; Keertan and small saving schemes.

2. Observations and Suggestions

2.1 Most of the members are illiterate but education of adult women has never been discussed in the meetings of the M.M. The M.S. and G.S. should contact the District Adult Education Office and request him to put in intensive efforts to initiate adult literacy oompaign in the village.

2.1.1 It was heartening to note that women though themselves, illiterate yet give importance to the education of girls. The Pradhan informed the investigator that now-a-days almost all the girls go to school and study upto 8th class. Only those girls who do not take interest in the studies or are mentally or physically handicapped are not attending the school. They desired that a middle school should be opened for girls in the village. M.S. should take up the matter with the District Education Officer.

2.2 The members desired that some income generating projects may be started in the village and soft loans may be arranged for them. They pointed out that leaders as well as the officers who come from Chandigarh to address M.M. Sammelan every year, make false promises and give false assurances for the improvement of the quality of life of the village women. But in practice nothing concrete is done for their economic betterment. They badly resent such statements and feel that they can no more be befooled.

2.3 The women did not have very pleasant experience about the 'Open Darbar' started by the state governments. They say that firstly they do not have time to go to B.D.O. or D.C to put their difficulties before hom. Secondly even if they do so, no concrete results come out. The authorities should take extra pains to develop confidence of the rural women in their sincerity to solve their problems.

3. Overall view:

The women of this small village are a politically aware and mentally alert group. Though majority of them are illiterate yet they are conscious of their rights and understand the importance of education for the younger generation. If special efforts could be made to inculcate desired values in them then some of them may be activised to work for the welfare of not only the women of their own village but other villages also.

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(Salawas)

(Block Salawas, District Rohtak)

1. <u>An Overview:</u>

1.1 Salawas is a bout 58 km. from the district headquarter. It has a co-educational school upto tenth class. No Aganwari exists in the village. It is mostly inhabited by Jats.

1.2 A registered M.M. is functioning in the village since 1985. At present there are 26 members on its rolls. Smt. Gian Kaur, A Jat, middle aged, pleasant, active, well behaved, hospitable women is the elected M.M. Pradhan. She is educated upto 4th class. Her husband is in the army so she is known as 'Fauji's wife' in the village. There are 7 other elected office bearers to share responsibilities of the M.M. All of them are illiterate.

1.3 Records of the M.M. were analysed for the period 9.4.85 to 25.1.89. It was found that during 45 months 97 meetings of the M.M. were conducted.

1.3.1 During the 97 meetings, the discussions revolved around Keertan; common diseases among children; personal cleanliness of children; necessity of keeping home and surroundings clean; use of home made medicines; balanced diet; family planning programmes; smoke-less Chullahas; preparation of pickles and other food items; need for nutritious diet; kitchen garden; need for starting income generating projects; care of woolen clothes; and immunisation of children.

2. <u>Observations and Suggestions:</u>

2.1 Though most of the members are illiterate yet the education of women and girls have never been discussed during the last 45 months. Education should get its due importance in the M.M. activities.

2.1.1 Most of the time in the M.M. had been spent on 'Keertan' and teaching the preparation of food items. This time could have been utilised for some more purposeful activities.

2.2 Aganwaries and M.M. Bhavan are the felt needs of the members. M.S. should seriously pursue the matter with block and district administration.

2.3 The Pradhan pointed out that members are very keen to go on educational tours. State government should provide opportunities for such exposure to the rural women. The benefits derived will be much more from these excursions than the money spent on the same.

2.4 Members are keen that some income generating projects may be started in the village for improving their financial position and quality of life. They pointed out that M.S. and G.S. simply talk about initiating such

projects but no concrete step has ever been taken to put the ideas into practice. This type of situation shakes faith of the members in the field staff and gives a set back to the movement. G.S. should work as a liaison between the members and the agencies which can provide soft loans and technical know how to them.

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Kahnor

(Block Kalanaur, District Rohtak)

1. Introduction

Kahnor is a big village and gives an impression of a small town to an outsider who visits there. It is a developed village with 'Pucca' streets and a reasonably good market where almost every thing of daily use is available at reasonable price. It is spread in a radius of 3 kilometer and is connected by regular and frequent bus service to block, district and state headquarters.

1.1 The majority of the inhabitants in the village belonging to younger generation are literate, mentally alert and well informed about the general happenings in the state and in the country. Some are agriculturists, others in business or in service. Most of the persons in service do daily up and down to Kalanaur or Rohtak. In this way the village is constantly in touch with the towns through these commuters.

1.2 The village has 7 Aganwaries for the children in the age-group 3-6 years. There are separate schools for boys and girls upto tenth class. For higher studies the children go to Kalanaur or Rohtak. The members are satisfied with the instructional facilities provided in the schools.

1.3 There is a registered Mahila Mandal (Registration Number 435) of a long standing. It was started in the year 1981 and by now has its roots deep in the women community. The binding force among the members is the daily 'Satsang' (Religious gathering) which is held even to date at the house of the ex-Pradhan of the M.M. for an hour or so daily in the afternoon.

2. <u>Composition of the Mahila Mandal</u>:

At present there are 38 members in the M.M. Out of these 34 are Punjabies (belonging to different castes), 1 Brahmin, 1 Scheduled Caste and 2 belong to Backward Castes. Smt. Maya Devi is the M.M. Pradhan who has been unanimously

elected by the members. She is a Punjabi, middle aged women and is the second Pradhan since the inception of the M.M. The first Pradhan Smt. Krishna Devi had resigned on 4.9.84 due to bad health and since then Smt. Maya Devi is heading the M.M. There are 7 other elected office bearers to share responsibilities with the Pradhan. Out of the 8 office bearers one is Harijan and the other are Punjabies. The five office bearers have undergone training for 5 days (21.2.84 to 26.2.84) at State Training Centre, Nilokheri.

3. <u>Analysis of the Activities of the Mahila Mandal.</u>

3.1 An analysis of the records of the M.M. from 27.6.81 to-date (Dec.1988) revealed that during the 8 years 52 meetings of the M.M. were convened as detailed in the next page:

S.No.	Year	No. of Meetings
1	1981	4
2	1982	9
3	1983	9
4	1984	10
5	1985	8
6	1986	3
7	1987	7
8	1988	19
	Total	52

Note: The number (52) does not include the daily 'Satsang' held at the ex-Pradhan's house.

3.2 During the 52 meetings the discussions revolved around election of M.M. Pradhan; need for M.M. Bhawan and the ways to get financial help; Purchase of musical instruments and 'Daries' required for 'Satsang'; Preparation of pickles;

balanced diet; smokeless choolhas; use of dustbins; family planning; advantages of taking green vegetables; care of woollen clothes when the winter season is over; construction of concrete floor for taking bath and cleaning utensils; growing fruit trees in the courtyards of the homes; kitchen garden; nutritious diet for children; knitting 'Sweater' by making use of old wool; keeping homes and surroundings clean; celebration of festivals; income generating projects e.g. making soap, candles; woollen garments by using knitting machine; running a retail general store; keeping the cattle's living place clean; small saving schemes; training programme at Nilokheri; use of napthalene for keeping streets, drains clean; storing grains; use of meatsafes; kitchen garden; loan for purchasing buffalows to women whose income was below Rs.3600/- per annum; provision of matching grant by the State for starting any income generation project; adult education and celebration of festivals.

4. Financial Position of the Mahila mandal.

4.1 The financial position of this M.M. is better than many other M.Ms in the block. Besides the foundation grant which it received at the time of registration, it has collected membership fee from the members @ Rs.5 per member (except SC and backward caste). An amount of Rs.1000/- was awarded to the M.M. (in April 1985) as prize money for organising different activities systematically. Rs.500/- was received by it from the Department of Social Welfare Haryana on 15.5.87. It was given from the discretionary grant quota of the Ex-Health Minister Smt. Kartar Devi.

5. Observations and Suggestions:

5.1 Though the M.M. is comparatively on a better financial footings but the money has not been utilised for any productive work. In the meetings the discussions had been held on starting some income generating projects but nothing concrete has materialised so far.

It appears that the members are not very ambitious to improve their economic status by initiating such projects. They are rather afraid to be involved with the spending of government money. They have a phobia that taking loan or spending government money entails a lot of botheration of keeping and submitting various records and documents. Due to this fear they have not even availed the loan facilities offered to them in the past for purchasing cattle.

5.1.1 In the circumstances it is desirable that Gram Seveka should make all possible efforts to dispel such fears from the minds of the members. She should also help them to maintain proper records of the income and expenditure of the M.M.

5.1.2 Gram Seveka should encourage members to make use of the money lying idle in the accounts of the M.M. for some income generating projects. She should help them to seek the advice of the concerned State Developmental Agency for this purpose.

If nothing else they can be guided to grow mushrooms, start poultry farms, co-operative milk diaries etc. which do not need extensive inventments or technical know-how and also have easy marketability.

5.2 As per official records about 250 smokeless choolhas (ovens) have been installed in the village. But after discussions with the rural women one gets an impression that the same are not very popular. The women feel that the same do not have much utility and they find the oven prepared by them much more convenient. They feel that smokeless ovens consume more fuel. Moreover wood is required to heat the same while in their oven they can use cowdung cakes which are available in plenty in their homes.

5.2.1 It is suggested that no scheme should be imposed on the rural folk. In the mania of realising the fixed targets the state employees ignore the spirit behind introducing innovations in the

rural areas. The villagers should first be convinced about the utility of a project and as a follow up programme their doubts, if any about the practicability of the scheme, should be thoroughly discussed and removed. The later part is missing and it speaks for the unpopularity of the scheme in this village.

5.3 The office bearers were trained at the State Training Centre at Nilokheri only once in the year 1984. It is suggested that frequent orientation courses may be organised for the members to keep them abreast with the changing socio-economic and political milieu. These courses may be organised at the block level with the cooperation of various developmental agencies.

5.4 It is heartening to note that office bearers (except one) can atleast write their names. The Harijan woman office bearer, who is illiterate may also be helped to learn writing her name instead of putting a thumb impression on the records.

5.5 The records of the M.M. indicate that during 52 meetings only twice Ms. Bhurpai, the Harijan members have put her thumb impression (on 18.6.88 and 12.10.88). It means that she was involved in the decision making process only twice in the past 8 years. It is suggested that deliberate efforts may be made to involve more frequently the women who belong to weaker sections of the society.

5.6 Most of the M.M. meetings have been utilised by the members in learning the preparation of sweets, pickles, vegetables, 'Churan', spices etc. In the initial few months it was alright because these items might have worked as hooking points to bring the women together to form M.M. for mutual help, co-operation and upliftment. But now when the M.M. is well established, the Members may be exposed to the changing needs of the society. For example they should be informed about the legal rights of girls in their paternal and matrimonial homes; homes recently opened in

Faridabad and Karnal for the women who are harassed by in-laws for dowry or maltreated by their husbands or others in the matrimonial homes (they can stay there wlongwith their children till some compromise is made between the two parties). They need to be educated about the consumer's rights and encouraged to participate in consumer protection movement recently being launched by the state government. Extracts from the newspaper are quoted below: '3 Panels for consumers in Haryana- (H.T. Correspondant, Chandigarh, Dec.21)-Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, Food and Supplies Minister, Haryana, today urged the people to make the consumer protection movement a sucess in the State. Inaugurating the first meeting of the Haryana State Consumer Protection Council, she said there was a dire need to educate the consumers about their rights.

Mrs. Swaraj said the State Government would soon set up three commissions for dealing with the consumer girevances. The three-member

State-level commission would be headed by a retired judge of the High Court. The other two commissions would be set up in Ambala and Hissar divisions. Each would cover six revenue districts.

The divisional grievances commissions would have the power to compensate consumers upto Rs.1 lakh and the State-level commission between Rs.1 lakh and Rs.10 lakh.

The maximum time limit for removing grievances and providing compensation would be five months. Any voluntary organisation, consumer's forum or individual could approach the commission.'

Similar ideas which are of importance in the present day context to improve their quality of life need be conveyed to them. Women may be encouraged to think for themselves. They have been conditioned since childhood that some one else is to think for them and their problems. They need deconditioning from this age old process. They should be encouraged to analyse

their problems and find out ways to come out of the same. Gram Seveka should look at the problems from rural women's point of view and work as a liaison between them and the other developmental agencies who can help them to improve their social and economic status.

5.6.1 The Mukheya Seveka (M.S) and Gram Seveka (G.S) should go through the newspapers and keep the members in touch with the latest developments in the state and the country. The members should wait for their visits and feel free to share their problems with them. M.S. and G.S. should be a symbol of harbringing information suiting members' interests and not a parrot who repeats the same old stories in a routine way simply to justify their visit to the village.

5.6.2 M.S. and G.S. may be given facilities or special allowance to purchase newspapers and relevant magazines to keep their knowledge up-to-date. They may be provided portable tape-recorders

to facilitate conveying relevant information to the members of M.M.

5.6.3 Orientation programmes may be organised for M.Ss and G.Ss to equip them for the important job of bringing awareness among the rural women and creating a desire in them for improving their quality of life. The M.Ss and G.Ss are mostly matriculate with a diploma in craft but their job has become very demanding in the present context. Hence the orientation courses should compensate for their academic qualifications.

5.7 As per the yearly target fixed for each M.M. it should motivate atleast 10 women to join Adult Education Centre. But during the 52 meetings in 8 years only once (on 21.1.88) the question of girls' education and adult education has been discussed in a running reference. It is suggested that the M.M should take up the question of girls' education and adult education more seriously to ensure that no girl in the

age group 6-14 remains illiterate. Adult women may also be encouraged to join Literacy Centres.

5.8 According to the yearly plan the M.M members should hold 25 meetings in a year. The M.M has not been able to fulfil this expectation. They should meet more frequently.

II

Block-wise Information about Mahila Mandals in District Rohtak, February, 1989

S.NO.	Block	No. of M.M (Registered)	No. of Villages	No.of Panchayts	No. of M.Ms under considera for Registerati
1.	Rohtak	27	27	27	
2.	Sampla	21	21	22	1
3.	Lakhan Manjra	24	24	25	1
4.	Meham	30	30	34	4
5.	Kalanaur	39	37	37	
6.	Beri	35	35	36	1
7.	Jhajjar	67	68	68	1
8.	Sahlawas	48	48		
9.	Matanhale	42	43	43	1
10.	Nahar	46	46	46	
11.	Bahadurgrh	51	51	51	
		432	432	441	9

III

Mahila Mandals selected for Intensive Study in District Rohtak (Haryana)

S.NO.	Block	Mahila Mandal	Remarks
I	Kalanaur	1. Knehli	
		2. Mayna	
		3. Shimli	
		4. Kharg Khurd	
		5. Kharg Kalan	
		6. Kalinga	
		7. Garhi Balabh	
		8. Patuvapur	
		9. Baniyani	
		10. Temurpur	
		11. Kalanor	
		12. Nigana	
		13. Awal	
		14. Ritoli	
		15. Kabulpur	
		16. Sudana	
II	Rohtak	17. Bhalot	
		18. Kalai Khas	
		19. Bhor	
III	Lakhan Manjra	20. Taja Manjra	
		21. Gadi Kheri	
IV	Meham	22. Madina Gidran	
		23. Madina Korsan	
		24. Mokhra Rose	
		25. Mokhra Kheri	
		26. Mokhra Khas	
V	Jhajjar	27. Kablana	
		28. Surakhpur Teppa Haveli	

VI	Beri	29. Chamanpura
		30. Deegal
VII		31. Bhesru khurd
		32. Gadi Sampla
[illegible]		33. Azad Nagar
		34. Matanhale
		35. Chuchakwas
IX	Nahar	36. Nahar
		37. Khera Tharu
X	Salawas	38. Salawas
		39. Bhurawas
XI	Bahadur garh	40.

Due to administrative reasons the selected M.Ms in the Block could not be convered under the study.

IV

Tools for Collecting Information

(a) Situational Study of the Mahila Mandals(M.Ms) in District Rohtak (Haryana)- Blockwise information

Name of: Block_____ B.D.O._____

Caste_____

Name and caste of: Mukheya Seveka_____

Craft Teacher (s)_____

Asstt Craft teacher(s)_____

2. No. of: villages in the Block_____

Mahila Mandals _____

3. When was the scheme of M.Ms started in the Block?

Year_____

4. Are all the M.Ms registered Yes/No (if no why?)_____

5. How many M.M Pradhans and office bearers have been sent for study tour since the introduction of the scheme? _____

6. How many office bearers of M.Ms have received training at Nilokheri so far? Total No._____

7. From how many M.Ms, office bearers have not been sent for training at Nilokheri so far?_____
Reasons_____

8. How are the women motivated to form a M.M?

9. What difficulties are faced in the formation of M.M and enrolling other members for the same?

10. Often M.M members belong to which caste (s) _____ and which economic status? _____
Rich/Middle/class/poor
(tickmark)

11. Is there any opposition from the community to the formation of M.Ms? If so who are the person(s) who often oppose?

PERSONS	Caste	Economic status Rich/Middle class/poor
- Men	( )	
- Women	( )	
- Panchayat	( )	
- Any other		

12. What are their objections?

13. What obstacles they put in the formation of the smooth functioning of M.Ms?

14. What do you do to overcome these problems?

15. What can be done to make M.M a more popular and successful movement?

16. Any administrative difficulties faced in the operation of the scheme? (Please suggest solution (s) alongwith the difficulty).

Signature_____

Name and designation_____

_____

(b) Information about the Mahila Mandal (s)

Name of the Block: Village:

1. Caste-wise information about the members of Mahila Mandals

Caste	Jat	Brahmin	S.C.	B.C.	Total
Number					

2. Information about the Office Bearers of M.M.

S.N.	Name	Position	Caste	Literate/ Illiterate	Remarks

3. Name of the B.D.O.

4. a. Name of the Mukheya Seveka_____Caste_____
   b. Educational Qualifications:_____
   Experience_____

5. a. Name of the Gram Seveka_____Caste_____
   b. Educational Qualifications_____Experience____

6. Registration date and No. of the Mahila Mandal

   _____

7. No. of Aganwaries:_____

8. Does the Village has separate school for girls upto Primary/Middle/High/ School level (Tickmark which is applicable)

(c) <u>Nodal Points for Discussion with the Mahila Mandal Members During Visits to the Villages alongwith the Officers Concerned with the Movement</u>

1. When did the M.M start working?

2. How much time it took to get it registered?

3. How were they motivated to form M.M in their village? Who was the initiator?

4. What difficulties the initiator (s) had to face to enrol other members?

5. How did she (they) convinced them of its utility to them? (What arguments were put forth in favour of M.M)

6. Was there any opposition from the community to the formation of M.M? If so who were the person (s) who opposed:

- Men ( )
- Women ( )
- Panchayat members ( )
- Any other within home or outside home

6.1 To which caste they belonged?
To which economic status they belonged?
Rich/Middle/Class/Poor

6.2 What were their objections?

6.3 What difficulties/obstacles they put in the way of formation of M.M or the smooth functioning of the M.M?

6.4 What was done to overcome these difficulties?
- Were efforts made to convince them of its utility?
(If so, details may be discussed)

- were they ignored and persons who co-operated formed a M.M?

- Any other steps taken by the initiator (S)

7. Is there perfect harmony among the members belonging to different castes? Yes/No

7.1 If 'Yes' how has this been achieved? (What are activities which have helped in achieving this harmony?)

7.2 If 'No' what are the points of conflict and what are the possible solution to resolve the same?

8. Have the office bearers undergone training at Nilokheri? If no why not?

8.1 How far has the training helped them in improving their quality of life as an individual and as a Community member?

8.2 In what way Mukheya Seveka (MS) or Gram Seveka (G.S) or Craft teacher's visit to the M.M meetings helped in improving their life pattern?

(If, helpful then details may be asked. If No what are the expectations of the members and what suggestions they can put forth to fulfil those expectations)

9. How many monthly meetings of the M.M are held in the village?

9.1 On an average how many members attend the same?

9.2 What are the usual timings of the meetings?

9.3 What are the main activities during these meetings?

10. In what way the members find these meetings useful?

10.1 How these meetings can be made more useful to the members?

11. What are the significant contribution(s) of the M.M to the welfare of:

- Individual members
- Community at large

12. What has made M.M a successful movement in the village and who is specifically responsible for the success of the M.M?

- M.M Pradhan- If yes how?(e.g. her personality, commitment, Social on economic or political status etc.)
- M.S or G.S.-If yes how?
- Any common thinking point (e.g. religion, caste commitment to a specific cause etc, if yes how?)

13. What is specifically responsible for making the M.M less popular in the village? (Details of the situation (s) or the person (s) responsible may be discussed)

14. Any other observation of the Investigator?

V

Items of Discussions During the Mahila Mandal Meetings Based on the Analysis of the Records of the Meetings held at Village, Block and District Levels

S.NO.	Discussions Points
1.	Cleanliness of clothes, home(specifically necessity of constructing kitchen and bath place with concrete floorings; proper arrangement of utencils: boxes etc), surroundings and importance of ventilators in the homes
2.	Use of dustbins and necessity of covering the garbage from health point of view
3.	Family planning techniques and required co-operation of Mahila Mandal members to motivate village women for tubectomy etc
4.	Family welfare programmes which cover immunisation, need for nutritious diet for children, pregnant and lactating mothers, feed interval for babies etc.
5.	Development of proper habits among children and precautions against the bad habits of misbehaviour, smoking, theft etc which children develop during adolescent period
6.	Use of home-made medicines
7.	Kitchen gardening to utilise drain water of the house or unused space in the fields and growing fruit trees in the courtyard
8.	Care of grains by storage in tins etc and use of insecticides
9.	Preservation of food articles, preparation of pickles squash etc
10.	Need for adopting timely measures as precautions from on-setting winter and summer heat and diseases which follow
11.	Care of woollen and other clothes
12.	Motivating women to learn tailoring, embroidery, craft works for home economy
13.	Utility of smokeless Chullahas

14. Enrolment of children in the school

15. Importance of adult education and imparting practical knowledge of writing names and counting numbers to the members

16. Importance of small savings

17. Information about the rationale of celebrating national and other festivals

18. Importance of taking up certain projects for the betterment of the financial position of members e.g. preparation of readymade garments, soap; charging rent for M.M utencils etc.

19. Election of office bearers; information about the working of M.M/enrolment of new members

20. Social evils like dowry, early marriage etc.

Report of an Annual Conference
(Held at Rohtak on November 21, 1988)

1. Introduction:

A Sammelan of Mahila Mandals (M.Ms) of Rohtak district was organised by the Haryana Government on November 21, 1988 at Rohtak. This was the fourth annual conference in the series. Sh. Hukum Singh, Development and Panchayat Minister, Haryana presided over the function. This type of Sammelans, one at the district level and one at the state level are an annual feature under the scheme. The expenditure for conducting these conferences are meted out by the state government from the funds allocated for the scheme.

2. Purpose:

The specific purposes of conducting these conferences are:

2.1 to provide an opportunity to the members of the M.Ms to exchange views among themselves and learn from each other's experiences. It is presumed that the mutual sharing can help them in finding out solutions to their problems themselves and this very feeling may help in developing self confidence in them to take decisions about the matters concerning them.

2.2 to acquaint them with the various developmental schemes being run for their economic benefits and social upliftment.

3. Participants:

A group of about 200 women which consisted of Mahila Mandal Pradhans and a few office bearers and members attended the conference. The offices of the District Development and Panchayat Department along with the Deputy Commissioner Rohtak were also present there. From state headquarter Joint Secretary and Director of the department alongwith their supporting staff participated in the meet. District officers of Rohtak dealing with Health, Education etc were also invited. From NCERT, New Delhi Smt. Janak Duggal attended the meet as an observer.

4. Highlights of the Programme:-

4.1 District officers acquainted the participants with the various schemes introduced in Haryana for the upliftment for rural folk and advised women to take advantage of the same. They also requested them to contribute actively in the national programmes of girls' enrolment and retention, family planning, immunisation, cleanliness drive and small saving by mobilising women in the villages.

4.2 Director Development and Panchayat department gave a brief account of the Mahila Mandal scheme. Thereafter

the Joint Secretary strongly advised women to understand their rights and learn to assert them in a collective manner. He tried to clear his point by giving a concrete example. He said women work from morning till evening in the homes as well as in the fields and thus are equal partners in the world of work with men. Hence when any decisions about the sale or purchase of land or any investments are to be made or the education and marriage of children are to be taken up they should be consulted invariably and their say should be given equal weightage. If this is not done they should assert for it. He gave another example to bring home his point of view to the participants. He pointed out if a man becomes addicted to liquer and swindles the family money or falls pray to any other vice and maltreats the wife then she should not accept defeat by going back to her parents. She should assert her right to stay in her matrimonial home and ask the man to stay out of the home. Moreover when a wife takes this stand then other women in the family and neighbourhood should support her and put social pressure on the man by condemning his behaviour. He informed the women that Haryana government has opened two centres one each at Karnal and Faridabad where any women who is maltreated by her in-laws can go and stay with her children till the

relations improve and become congenial for her to go back. The expenses of their stay are meted out by the government.

It was heartening to hear from him that the Safai Karmchari in the villages being appointed under the newly introduced scheme will work under the supervision of M.Ms. Of late a few M.M Pradhans have been requesting for it. He also assured the M.Ms that a letter will be issued to the district officers to meet M.M Pradhans also during their visit to the villages and try to listen to their problems and solve the same on the spot as far as possible.

The above mentioned steps taken by the state government are sure to enhance the status of M.Ms in the villages.

4.3 The Minister, development and Panchayat, Govt. of Haryana endorsed the views of the Joint Secretary and assured women of all possible help in the process of their social and economic upliftment. He encouraged them to start some production units on co-operative basis. They should take initiative and take advantage of the loan facilities being provided by banks for this purpose. The state government has made a provision that 30% of these loans may be given to women. Now it is for women to make use of this provision.

He assured them of providing proper network for the sale of their products.

He suggested women to be attentive when some one comes to their village to give information about some developmental programmes and shun the negative image of themselves that such talks are beyond their comprehension. Rather they should always be keen to know about the programmes which the state government has launched or plan to launch for their benefit. He advised M.M members to share the discussions held during this conference with the women in the village who have not been able to participate in it.

5. <u>A Few Lacunas in the Organisation of the Conference:</u>

5.1 One day is too short a period for such type of conferences. These may be held at least for 3 days. On the first day M.M Pradhan can put up their problems and general discussions may be held. This will provide an opportunity to them to learn from the practical experiences and tried out suggestions and advices of each other.

On the second day the group can visit a few good M.Ms and observe the functioning of the same. The programmes which are held during this conference can be held on the third day.

5.2 At present in the conferences the women are passive listeners. They should be given more opportunities for the outlet of their views. All possible efforts

may be made to help them to develop positive self image of themselves and communication skills. During these conferences the District officers should try to mix up with them to generate a confidence in them that they are public servants and can be easily contacted at the time of need. Perhaps a common lunch on such occassions would have served a much better purpose than the seggregated lunch for the Minister, officials and the participants which is a current practice.

5.3 The meet can be made more lively by showing different video films imparting knowledge about various development schemes and their beneficiaries instead of giving lectures to them continuously for 4-5 hours. They are not used to this life pattern and get bore.

5.4 More pictures, charts, posters with catchy captious in the simplest possible language could be hung in the Pandal. Some persons could even be put on duty to explain these visuals to the illiterate women so that they could also appreciate the same.

VII

Mahila Mandals As a Protecting Force For Women's Interests in Their Matrimonial Homes

It is a common tradition specially in the country side that the girls belonging to one village cannot be married in the same village. The bridegrooms necessarily should be from another village. It is presumed that the persons in a village community are related by distant blood as they descend from the common ancestors. So girls and boys belonging to a community cannot be married in the same village. As such a girl when goes to another village is a stranger there, she is completely dependent on her husband or in-laws for physical and emotional protection. If these people maltreat her for some considerations, there is none in the matrimonial home nay village to support her or take careof her interests. Sometimes the things go to such an extent that if she is murdered, beaten to death or even burnt alive there is not a single person who will come forward to stand as a witness to these horrowing brutal acts of the in laws. Rather the worst part of the story is that in-laws are capable of producing false witnesses of the village quack, of a tempoo driver, village chowkidar etc. in their favour. A common trick of these persons is that they show it as a natural death by persuading these persons to appear as defence in the court of justice and

say that she was suffering from serious ailment and while she was being taken to the government hospital for treatment she died on the way. So she was brought back home. Her parents were informed but they did not turn up, so ultimately the body had to be disposed off. It is not difficult for in-laws to produce a witness saying in the court of law that he did go personally to inform her parent but they did not bother as they knew that the girl was suffering from incurable disease and this was bound to happen one day or the other.

In this way this tradition sometimes puts the girls in the den of death due to the avarice of the people in the matrimonial homes in the unknown and strange villages. It is not so easy to change the age old traditions but in such cases Mahila Mandals in the villages can prevent such incidents. Mahila Mandal office bearers can persuade such in-laws to behave properly with the bride. They can put moral and social pressure on them as a preventive measure to such horrible incidents and in the villages the social pressure do work even to-date.

Mahila Mandals can even inform secretly the parents of the girl about the maltreatment being meted out to her. They can confide in senior police officers at the district level by posting a personal letter

and as such work as a strong preventive force to such brutal happenings. Associating M.Ms with special crime cells can have tremendous positive effect. But in order to prepare the members of Mahila Mandals for these tasks, they need to be embolden to raise their voice collectively against such things. Suitable awareness generation programmes may be worked out at women study Unit of the NCERT to strengthen M.M on this front The require input may be passed on to the training centre at Nilokheri for inclusion in the syllabus of the training programme (s) meant for Mukheya Sevekas, Gram Sevekas, M.M office bearers etc. Women study Unit can also organise orientation courses for the key persons to prepare M.Ms as a strong protecting force for the interests of rural women on all fronts in the countryside. There is a need to prepare such types of programmes which may appeal to the emotions and reasoning power of the members of the M.Ms. The crux of the problem is to make M.M aware of their latent collective power and empower them to make use of the same in their collective interest.

VIII

Persons who Co-operated in the Study

(List of Persons Contacted Through Correspondence or Personally in Connection with the Situational Study of Mahila Mandals in District Rohtak)

S.NO.	Name and Address
1.	Shri L.M. Goel Commissioner Development and Panchayat, Haryana Chandigarh
2.	Shri B.R. Anand Joint Secretary Development and Panchayat Haryana Chandigarh
3.	Ms. Mohinder Kaur Director Development Programmes, Haryana Chandigarh
4.	Shri Balbir Singh Malik Deputy Commissioner Rohtak
5.	Shri Hoshiar Singh D.D.P.O Mini Secretariat Rohtak
6.	Shri Bihari Singh B.D.O. Kalanaur (Rohtak)
7.	The B.D.O. Lakhan Manjara Rohtak
8.	The B.D.O. Meham (Rohtak)
9.	The B.D.O. Beri (Rohtak)

10. The B.D.O
Jhajjar
(Rohtak)

11. The B.D.O
Sampla
(Rohtak)

12. The B.D.O.
Matanhale
(Rohtak)

13. The B.D.O.
Salawas
(Rohtak)

14. The B.D.O.
Nahar
(Rohtak)

15. Smt. Prem Dulari Bhatnagar
Lady Circle Supervisor's Office
Zilla Parishad Hall,
(Rohtak)

16. Smt. Santosh Seth
Lady Circle Supervisor
Zilla Parishad Building
(Rohtak)

17. Smt. Vidyotma
Mukheya Seveka
Kalanaur Block
(Rohtak)

18. Shri Raghubir Singh
Lady Circle Supervisor's Office
Zilla Parishad Building
(Rohtak)

19. Ms Kiran Angra
Lecturer
Hindu College,
Sonepat